

# TWO GREAT INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES

RASH BEHARI BOSE  
&  
JYOTINDRA NATH MUKHERJEE

BY  
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Joint author of *Sri Aurobindo And The New Thought In Indian Politics, The Origins Of The National Education Movement, India's Fight For Freedom, The Growth Of Nationalism In India, Bipin Chandra Pal And India's Struggle For Swaraj*, etc.



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## FOREWORD

The primary object of this book is to give a critical account of the role played by Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra (generally known as Jatindra) Nath Mukherjee in the revolutionary movement in India. Both of them are justly regarded today as the two most outstanding leaders thrown up by the revolutionary movement in Bengal during its first phase in the first quarter of this century. Though the career of the second was cut short by his glorious death in a free fight with the British on the bank of the Buri-Balam, the other lived long enough (though outside India) to carry on his life's mission almost to a successful end.

In spite of the attempts in some quarters to minimise the role of the revolutionaries in the history of freedom movement in India, their countrymen are now becoming gradually conscious of the deep debt of gratitude they owe to these heroes for the achievement of Indian independence. This book is sure to contribute to the growth of this feeling by delineating, in a critical manner and with the help of a vast mass of fresh materials not hitherto available, the wonderful capacity for organisation and work of these two eminent revolutionary leaders who dedicated their lives to the liberation of their country. Written in a pleasant and lucid style, the book throughout maintains a thoroughly dispassionate and critical attitude.

The value of the book is greatly enhanced by a critical review, in broad outline, of the revolutionary movement for freedom of India in the twentieth century.

The writer is well-known for her valuable contributions on allied subject in numerous publications, and I have no doubt that the present work will not only sustain her reputation but enhance it in a great measure. I commend the book to everyone who cares to take any interest in the true history of the attainment of India's freedom.

R. C. Majumdar





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The book has grown out of my studies and investigations in to what is known as India's Revolutionary Movement undertaken about two years ago with the award of a Senior Research Fellowship offered by the Universities Grants Commission of India.

It is, in the main, based on original sources and records, both official and non-official, Printed and MSS. So far as official sources are concerned, the Intelligence Branch Records of the Government of West Bengal and the Home (Political) Proceedings of the Government of India preserved in the National Archives have been substantially ransacked for the purpose. As regards non-official sources the private letters and writings of the former revolutionaries, both Printed and MSS, and the contemporary Indian newspapers and periodicals have been largely utilised for the work. On many a controversial issue, truth has been elicited both by correspondence and personal contact with a large number of former revolutionaries who are able to speak from direct knowledge about particular incidents in the larger revolutionary movement of the country. Instead of indicating the sources separately at the end of the book, references to them have been made in the foot-notes on each page at the appropriate point. Reader's convenience is the chief argument for this method.

In the preparation of the work I have received encouragement and help from a large number of scholars and patriots, both of this province and outside, to all of whom my sincere gratitude is due. In this connection special mention must, however, be made of the facilities of work given to me by Dr. P. C. Chakravarty, Head of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, and by Dr. Triguna Sen, the former Vice-Chancellor of the Jadavpur University. I am also much indebted to Dr. Tara Chand, the eminent historian, for kindly granting me access to some of the rare and confidential files now in his custody, bearing on the subject of my research. To Dr. R. C.

Majumdar I owe some special obligation not only for the valuable Foreword he has kindly written but also for the help I received from his *History Of The Freedom Movement In India* in connection with my research.

Finally, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Smt. Chitralekha Bhattacharya, M.A., Lecturer in History at the S. S. Jalan Girls' College, Calcutta, for the labour of love she has undertaken to prepare the Index.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I

The monographs presented in these pages do not seek to offer a detailed history of the multi-facet revolutionary movement of India nor do they cover in their sweep the activities of all the important revolutionary leaders representing different groups and parties. The work confines itself to a study of the political life of two of the greatest revolutionaries of India—Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee—the organization of their parties, their ideas and ideologies as well as their *modus operandi* in India's revolutionary movement which, in a sense, constitutes the most daring aspect of the national struggle for Independence.

After the suppression of the Manicktola conspiracy as well as the arrest or deportation of many of the prominent leaders, the first phase of the revolutionary movement in India may be said to have come to an end. A hush had then fallen upon the country. The Anushilan Samiti was suppressed and many other samitis with political complexion were also declared unlawful. This, however, did not mean that the revolutionary spirit was stamped out from the country. It had already struck its roots deep into the consciousness of the younger generation. The work of the older group was the preparation of the mind of the people for revolutionary ideals and methods; the work of the new group concerned itself mostly with the execution of the plot. Both Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee represented the second phase of the revolutionary movement and they gave more realistic orientations to Indian politics. They believed that a nation's liberty could not be achieved merely by political dacoities nor by the murder of a few agents of the alien bureaucracy. They stood for a bolder and more comprehensive scheme of political action or armed rising against the British Indian Empire, first, by securing the support of the Indian army and, secondly, by enlisting the military-financial

assistance of some first class Powers, particularly those inimical to England at that moment. England's involvement in the World War I and the consequent distraction of her resources came as a veritable god-send to the revolutionaries who eagerly seized the opportunity of effecting in India an armed revolution for her emancipation from imperial thrall. They took every possible step to win over the army and forge links with the international forces. Although their dream did not materialise at that very moment, rather it was a frustration—yet, they left behind them a glorious tradition of revolutionary action which had its culmination in the organization of the Azad Hind Fauj in East Asia during the World War II. Jyotindra Nath died in 1915 and Rash Behari in 1945. Neither of them lived long enough to see the political emancipation of India which, however, owes a very good deal to their self-denying spirit and action. It is a pity that even these greatest patriots of history have been denied due recognition by the generation now reaping the fruits of their toil, suffering and sacrifice.

## II

Since the achievement of Independence by India in 1947 a number of *idolas* has grown up in the country and has found wide currency due to the persistent propaganda of a section of politicians. One of these *idolas* is the idea that the political consummation of India of August, 1947 was chiefly the handiwork of the Indian National Congress and that it was an inevitable outcome of its strenuous moral and constitutional fight with the British rulers. Closely linked up with this is another myth that the revolutionary movement of India was after all foam and fury, signifying little beyond the wastage of some valuable property and the destruction of many precious human lives. In any case, the role of the revolutionaries in the achievement of India's Independence is still today much too minimised, the official apologists claiming that the crown of martyrdom to the cause of Freedom rightfully belongs to the Congress. This view of Indian history is after all a delusion which instead of being dissipated with time is gaining ground in post-Independence period, producing a good deal of muddle in our political thinking

not merely with regard to the past but also in respect of the present and the future. One who has the opportunity of examining the Intelligence Branch Records of the Government of old Bengal and the Home (Political) Proceedings of the Government of India, particularly those relating to the most crucial stages of our struggle, will find it difficult to accept the current notion about the history of India's Freedom Movement.

Whatever the doctrinaires might say, one undeniable teaching of history is that all political struggles are by their very nature trials of strength and that its success depends, in the main, not on the logicity of the case but on the application of force, armed or otherwise,—on the amount of pressure brought to bear upon the powers that be. In a democratic country constitutional agitation is, no doubt, a potent instrument of public pressure, but there also the main issues at dispute ultimately depend for their solution not on the moral persuasion but on the capacity of the dissatisfied people to hit back the Government if their grievances long remain unredressed. History teaches that even peaceful or constitutional agitation may wrest some beneficial reforms from the rulers only if it is accompanied by a show of force or element of violence in the background. Physical force need not necessarily be applied in every instance, but it must lie ready to be applied if the occasion so demands. It is common experience that in the big international conferences of peace the tone or the voice of a State representative is generally determined by the striking capacity that that particular State has already accumulated at home. It is characteristic of power not to voluntarily surrender any of its fortified privileges except under pressure and without the context of dreadful possibilities of popular revolt and rising. Even in England, the supposed land of peaceful constitutional progress, every stage of Freedom's expansion from the Magna Carta (1215) to the Bill of Rights (1689) was accompanied by either actual violence or potential threat of it. It is a romantic conception of history to regard the course of English constitutional progress as a smooth sailing. The freedom movement of a subject people which has got to throw off the foreign tentacle, has far less chance of success by moral and peaceful methods. Such a fulfilment in history is not given to human destiny.

## III

The British bureaucracy in India like its ancient or modern prototype everywhere on earth, could not rise superior to the common human frailties. Once entrenched in power, they clung tenaciously to it and refused to lend their ears to the voice of reason unless and until the situation became surcharged with the spirit of rebellious fury, violence and terror. They saw reason in things only when the blood of their brethren came to be shed by the revolutionaries. What really caused consternation in the mind of the alien bureaucracy in those days was not so much the constitutional agitation led by the Indian National Congress as the policy of violence and terror adumbrated by the leaders of the physical force movement. Even the Congress agitation by constitutional methods came to be feared and respected by the alien Government only when it showed awful signs of disorderly turbulence or tended to develop into a gigantic physical force movement, as in 1942. In 1947, the British rulers ultimately parted with power from India not so much because of the persuasive logic of the Congress agitation as because of the pressure of the surging revolutionary forces stemming out of the World War II. The grim memories of the I. N. A.'s battles in the Imphal-Kohima sector against the British Empire began to weigh heavily since then upon the mind of the British imperialists like a veritable nightmare.

## IV

The growth of Extremism in Indian politics and the cult of revolution in the country since 1906, aiming at *Purna Swaraj* or complete Independence for India through passive or active resistance, gave a new dimension to India's struggle for Freedom. The new generation of politicians headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghose rejected as fantastic the old mendicant politics of the Congress which sought to secure qualified freedom for India by methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation. Believing in the policy of purification by blood and sacrifice, the revolutionaries or the so-called anarchists went a step further and



laid a widespread network of secret societies advocating the policy of triumph through terror. As the physical force movement leading to acts of violence against the bureaucracy expanded and grew in strength, the British Government launched a counter campaign of repression and hurried through the Imperial Legislature measures of considerable potency to kill the spirit of insurgent nationalism in the land. As part of a larger policy conciliatory measures were also resorted to to rally the Moderates to the cause of the Crown. The basis of this new repression-cum-conciliation policy of British Imperialism was well laid in the famous Arbroath speech of Mr. John Morley (October 21, 1907), then Secretary of State for India. Morley said: "....we shall not be deterred from pursuing to the end, a policy of firmness on the one hand, and of liberal and steady reform on the other". The bureaucratic repression that rained down upon the revolutionaries since 1907 drove the movement underground but instead of killing it kindled the spirit of revolutionary fire all the brighter. Even after the promulgation of the severest repressive measures, secret acts of conspiracy and violence continued unabated and kept the bureaucracy in constant terror. As Bengal was the main bulwark of revolutionary conspiracy in India during 1908-1918 the following statement of the D.I.G., Bengal, dated January 28, 1915, on the political situation of 1914 is worth careful consideration:

"The continued occurrence of these crimes proves conclusively that the forces of revolution have in no way relaxed their activity and, as will be shown later on, in spite of excellent checks administered and notwithstanding the capture during the year of several of the more dangerous members, who were absconding for long periods, this extremely well organised movement defies all our efforts at repression and is considerably more virile and troublesome at the beginning of 1915 than it has been in the past".

Apart from an increasing number of political dacoities and assassinations of informers as well as Government officers, the two attempted revolutions in the country with the connivance of the British Indian army and with foreign financial assistance organized respectively by Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee (February, 1915 and June-July, 1915), followed by free fights between the revolutionaries, on the one hand, and the

agents of the British bureaucracy, on the other, at Balasore (September, 1915), at Salkia (August, 1916), at Gauhati (January, 1918) and at Dacca (June, 1918) very much unnerved the Government. The activities of the Indian revolutionaries from outside India in collaboration with international forces—the *Ghadr* conspiracy in the U. S. A. and the plot of the Berlin-India Committee in Germany—trying to knock at the eastern and western gates of India respectively deepened the crisis for the British Empire, and their representatives had once again to take recourse to a policy of conciliation alongside with sterner measures of repression. As the Morley-Minto Reforms (May, 1909) and the Repeal of the Bengal Partition (December, 1911) seemed too inadequate in the changed political conditions, a new deal of concessions in the shape of Montagu—Chelmsford Reforms (1919) had to be administered by the rulers for facilitating the transformation of a “representative” government into a “responsible” one. Side by side with the passage of Defence of India Rules and the Rowlatt Bills and the perpetration of the horrors at Jallianwallabagh, conciliatory policy was also adopted, not merely by introducing new constitutional reforms but by declaring the Amnesty both for the underground revolutionaries and for the political prisoners already condemned to life or long-term imprisonment. For a time the challenging crisis to the British Indian Empire was averted by the rulers.

## V

The advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene and the inauguration of the Non-Co-operation Movement in 1920 was a landmark in the history of India's Freedom Movement. The whole country under his magic influence caught the noble contagion of nationalism and “the ideas of 1905” found through him greater fruition. But the credit for all this must not go to Gandhiji alone. The impact of the World War I together with that of the Indian revolutionary activities on the head and heart of India was to a very large extent responsible for the promotion of a new political consciousness in the country. Gandhiji exploited the situation according to his idea and plan and converted the existing Congress into a powerful fighting

organization. The role of the revolutionaries in this silent transformation was at least as great as that of the constitutionalists of the Congress. At the call of Gandhiji even a large number of old revolutionaries also assembled under the Congress banner and lent strength to it in diverse capacities.

But with all this, the activities of the revolutionaries with their acts of violence and terror did not cease. In darkness and obscurity the revolutionary forces were gathering strength behind the eyes of the bureaucracy. An explosion of their fury as manifest in the Chittagong Armoury Raid led by Surya Sen and others in April, 1930 shook the British Government in India to its foundations. For three days the revolutionaries held the town under their control and the vestiges of British rule were completely wiped out from its face. The murder of a number of high-ranking British officials including three District Magistrates of Midnapore and one of Comilla during the same period (1930-35) struck terror into the mind of the Government which in pursuance of its old repression-cum-conciliation policy granted a further dose of Provincial Autonomy in 1935.

## VI

The fourth and final act in the drama was enacted during the years 1942-1947. Whatever the Congress apologists might argue, the national movement of August 1942 was far from being a peaceful and constitutional agitation confined to the limits of law. The Quit India Movement as it was termed virtually developed in no time into a mighty revolutionary movement producing violence, bloodshed and terror. This took place at a time when the British military power was at its lowest ebb and the Indian National Army headed by Rash Behari Bose was enjoying the confidence of Japan, then the deadliest enemy of the British Empire in the East. This was followed by an armed invasion of the British Indian Empire from the east by the Azad Hind Fauj led by Netaji who fought battles of India's freedom in the Imphal-Kohima sector in 1944. Although the armed attack was ultimately repelled by the British, yet the memories of the heroic fight put up by the Indian National Army soon became a permanent possession with Indians. They soon became

embedded in popular consciousness as a potent animating force. On the occasion of the historic I. N. A. trial in the Red Fort of Delhi the whole subcontinent became the scene of a mighty moral and emotional revolution. The Congress veterans who had described the Netaji during the war period as an enemy of the country were swept off their feet by the new tidal waves of nationalism rushing over India at the end of the war. The glorious tradition created by Netaji and the I. N. A. soldiers electrified the whole sub-continent with unprecedented enthusiasm, not even excluding the Congress which was now possessed by the new spirit of nationalism. The dry bones of Hindusthan once again became instinct with life. The alien rulers clearly perceived that the day of their reckoning was fast approaching, and this perception was quickened by the unprecedented sight of the outbreak of the mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy in 1946. The British statesmen with their keen sense of realism could see the handwriting on the wall, for it was being written in blood. Finally, in August 1947, they retired from the Indian scene apparently gracefully, but really under the threat of fearful and terrible consequences of a bloody revolution which they were wisely enough unwilling to face in the future interests of the British nation.

## CHAPTER ONE

# INDIA'S REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

### GENESIS OF THE SECRET SOCIETY IN BENGAL

Towards the end of the nineteenth century when the leaders of the Indian National Congress such as Pherozshah Mehta and Mahadev Govind Ranade were conducting the nationalist movement in India along legal and constitutional lines pinning much reliance on the native generosity and liberal professions of Britain, a minority of ardent Indian patriots headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak were preparing the mind of the people for an acute struggle with the alien Government. The latter believed not in the efficacy of a wordy battle with the bureaucracy but in action and extreme sacrifice for the country. If the credit for the promulgation of Boycott or Passive Resistance as a weapon of India's Freedom Movement belongs to Bengal, Maharashtra deserves to be congratulated on being the pioneer of the physical force movement for attaining India's Independence. It is from Maharashtra that the new impulse was brought to Bengal by Aurobindo Ghose and Jatindra Nath Banerjee at the beginning of the present century.

Aurobindo Ghose destined to play a foremost role in India's Freedom Movement was mentally and spiritually more allied to the temper of Tilak than to that of any other Indian leader of the time. In his serial articles on "New Lamps For Old" written shortly after his return from Cambridge in 1893, he gave a clear and powerful expression to his early

political thought.<sup>1</sup> It was a vigorous attack on the then unnational Indian Congress about which he observed "that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders;—in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed".<sup>1</sup> His main complaint against the then Congress was that it aimed at an "isolated predominance" of one class of people—the middle class of India, leaving the vast proletarian mass entirely off the board. "Yet the proletariat," he observed, "is the real key of the situation. Torpid he is and immobile; he is nothing of an actual force, but he is a very great potential force, and whoever succeeds in understanding and eliciting his strength, becomes by the very fact master of the future".<sup>2</sup> In the field of practical work, he found the record of the Congress to be a very poor show, its activities being confined merely to the passage of a few pious resolutions annually at its sessions. He also rejected the petitioning policy of the Congress and clearly suggested that it is not by prayer and petition but by "purification by blood and fire" that a nation's liberty could be achieved. He asked his countrymen not to adopt England as their political exemplar, but France which "blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated oppression of thirteen centuries".<sup>3</sup> It was in this mental background that Aurobindo, while living in Baroda, came into touch with one Thakur Sahib who initiated him into the secret society in Maharashtra.<sup>3</sup> At the Ahmedabad Congress he had also an

1. Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee: *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought* (Calcutta, 1956, p. 75).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
3. About Thakur Sahib referred to above Sri Aurobindo states that he was a noble of the Udaipur State with the title of Thakur.

exchange of views with Tilak whom he considered to be "the one possible leader for a revolutionary party". Thanks to Tilak, already a party of action had grown up in Maharashtra and secret societies were flourishing there. The murder of Mr. Rand, the Plague Commissioner, and Lieut. Ayerst by the Chopekar brothers in Poona (1897) set the first example of political murder, and it has been ascertained later that both the Chopekar brothers and their club were inspired by Tilak's ideas and methods. The Marathas were thus the pioneers in the field of secret societies and in spreading revolutionary doctrines all over India for the overthrow of British power.<sup>4</sup>

Both official and unofficial sources reveal that Aurobindo Ghose even before he plunged himself directly into Bengal politics tried to influence the political life of Bengal from his distant base at Baroda. About the year 1901 he had sent from Baroda Jatindra Nath Banerjee, a soldier in the Gaikwar's army, to organize secret societies and preach the cause of freedom in Bengal.<sup>5</sup> This was followed by the despatch from Baroda of Barindra Kumar Ghose, Aurobindo's younger brother, on the same political mission (1902). Jatindra Nath on his arrival in Calcutta founded an *akhra* or gymnasium at Upper Circular Road with the ostensible object of imparting physical training to the young men including

"The Thakur was not a member of the Council in Bombay; he stood above it as the leader of the whole movement while the Council helped him to organize Maharashtra and the Mahratta States. He himself worked principally upon the Indian Army of which he had already won over two or three regiments. Sri Aurobindo took a special journey into Central India to meet and speak with Indian sub-officers and men of one of these regiments." Vide *Sri Aurobindo On Himself And On The Mother* (Pondicherry, 1953, pp. 28-29).

4. *Note On The Growth Of The Revolutionary Movement In Bengal* (L. No. 47) as preserved in the I. B. Deptt., Govt. of West Bengal.
5. *An Account Of The Revolutionary Organizations In Bengal Other Than The Dacca Anusilan Samiti* (L. No. 54) preserved in the I. B. Office, Govt. of West Bengal.

boxing, wrestling, riding, swimming etc., but the underlying motive being the organization of a secret society within this innocent outer shell. Barin Ghose on his coming to Bengal joined hands with Jatin Banerjee who had found in Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya of Arabalia (24 Parganas) another enthusiastic worker.<sup>6</sup> While Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya looked after the financial aspects of the society such as the collection of subscriptions etc., Barin Ghose took upon himself the work of propaganda by extensive tours all over Bengal. His efforts bore fruit in the foundation of various *akhra*s and samitis, particularly in Cuttack, Bankura, Ranchi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Dacca, Krishnagore and Basirhat. The root idea behind these formations was "to stir up young people to take part in revolutionary work and to free the country from foreign yoke".<sup>7</sup>

It has been recorded by Aurobindo Ghose that shortly after the foundation of Jatin Banerjee's *akhra* in Calcutta, the former tried to unify the revolutionary forces in Bengal under the leadership of Barrister Pramatha Nath Mitter. An executive committee was soon formed consisting of P. Mitter as President, C. R. Das and Aurobindo Ghose as Vice-Presidents and Surendra Nath Tagore as Treasurer. Facts on record do not show that Sister Nivedita actually joined this executive committee.<sup>8</sup> Jatin Banerjee's society came to be patronized and financed not only by the

6. The statement of Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya on the history of the initial phase of the revolutionary society as incorporated in the *Appendices* to Bhupendra Nath Datta's *Bharater Dvitiya Swadhinatar Itihas* (Calcutta, 3rd edn., 1949).

7. The statement of Barindra Kumar Ghose before the Deputy Supdt. of Police, Bengal, on May 3, 1908.

8. Vide the article written jointly by Uma Mukherjee and Haridas Mukherjee on *Sister Nivedita And The Revolutionary Movement In Bengal* published in *Sunday Jugantar* on October 15, 1961. Also see in this connection *Jatiya Andolane Satis Chandra Mukherjee* (Calcutta, 1960, pp. 128-146) by the same authors.



above-mentioned figures but also by Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Abinash Chandra Chakravarty, Surya Kanta Acharya Choudhury, Jogendra Chandra Vidyabhusan, Subodh Chandra Mallick, Sakham Ganesh Deuskar and others. Aurobindo Ghose in particular regularly sent a large sum of money for the maintenance of the society from the very beginning. Jatin Banerjee made provisions in his society for teaching manly physical exercises to the general body of its members, while political knowledge regarding revolutionary movements in various countries was also disseminated to a select few of dependable character.<sup>9</sup>

✓ In spite of this hopeful beginning the first secret society of Bengal as founded by Jatin Banerjee died a premature death mainly due to the conflict that arose between Jatin Banerjee, on the one hand, and Barin Ghose, on the other. After doing some preliminary political work in Bengal up to the middle of 1903 Barin returned to Aurobindo Ghose, his elder brother, in Baroda. Shortly afterwards Jatin Banerjee also, in view of his differences with other members, left the society in disgust and disappointment at the failure of his mission. Thus the society virtually collapsed.

In 1904 Barin Ghose again came back to Calcutta to resume his work and push vigorously the cause of secret societies in Bengal. His immediate object was to form around him a band of self-sacrificing young men who would devote themselves whole-heartedly to the work of the country's liberation even by a resort to physical force. He toured through many districts of Bengal, opening *akhras* or *samitis* in various places and infusing a new spirit into the people. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, Debabrata Bose and Bhupendra Nath Datta became his closest associates and comrades and formed the inner ring of a bigger circle. Aurobindo

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9. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya's statement included in B. N. Datta's book.

Ghose also came to Bengal once or twice in 1904 following the break-up of Jatin Banerjee's *akhra* and tried in vain to effect a union between Jatin Banerjee and Barin Ghose. For some time he was then putting up at Grey Street jointly with Barin Ghose, Jatin Banerjee and Abinash Bhattacharya who were later joined there by two Maratha young men too. It was from this place that Aurobindo wrote out an anonymous leaflet under the caption "No Compromise" which vigorously advocated the ideal of no compromise with the British bureaucracy unless and until the Indian soil was free.<sup>10</sup>

The next important work of Aurobindo Ghose was the publication of another anonymous leaflet entitled *Bhawani Mandir* towards the end of 1905 sketching the ideals and methods of revolutionary work. The Intelligence Branch Records repeatedly affirm that Aurobindo was prudent enough to perceive that the only hope of success of a national movement was to spread the doctrine of discontent against England and to unite the people of all provinces in one feeling of hostility towards foreign rule. He also realized that "the surest and the safest ground to proceed on would be religion. He first conceived the idea of training missionaries to be sent as sannyasis to all parts of India to preach the new religion—the worship of Motherland".<sup>11</sup> The contents of *Bhawani Mandir* were nothing but revolutionary doctrines preached under religious garb.<sup>12</sup> Thus Aurobindo Ghose played a most formative role in the genesis of secret societies in Bengal.

#### THE ANUSILAN SAMITI OF CALCUTTA

Parallel to these activities of Aurobindo-Jatin-Barin group, another momentous development was

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10. *Ibid.*

11. *Note On The Growth Of The Revolutionary Movement In Bengal.*

12. *Sri Aurobindo And The New Thought In Indian Politics*, pp. XXIV-XXVI.

taking place during this period, and that was the foundation of the Anusilan Samiti in Calcutta. Brought into being as a club of physical exercises in March, 1902 by Satis Chandra Bose, it was shifted in 1905 to 49 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. For some time Jatin Banerjee's *akhra* and Satis Bose's *akhra* functioned simultaneously under the patronage of Barrister P. Mitter. Satis Bose records in a written statement<sup>13</sup> that on P. Mitter's initiative and direction the two societies were amalgamated, giving rise to a bigger organization under the presidentship of P. Mitter. P. Mitter was a staunch nationalist and strove hard to inspire the Bengali youths with ideals of physical prowess and bravery. Secret revolutionary plottings and resort to violent methods for political purposes were not, however, much to his liking.

With the outbreak of the Swadeshi Movement in 1905 which stirred the country to its inmost depths, the activities of the Anusilan Samiti began to develop rapidly, drawing new recruits and spreading out its branches in the mofussil—at Hooghly, Belghoria, Panihati, Nataghar, Ghola, Fuleswar, Harinavi, and Alka (Khulna district). In Calcutta its branches were opened also at Garpar Road, Parsee Bagan, Behala, Tala, Chetla and Pataldanga.<sup>14</sup> At first they were all physical and moral culture centres but gradually they began to acquire a political complexion. At the end of the year 1905 the Dacca Anusilan Samiti was founded with Pulin Das as Secretary and P. Mitter as President, and it was affiliated to the parent organization in Calcutta with Satis Bose as Secretary. About the objects and activities of the Anusilan Samiti the

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13. The statement of Satis Chandra Bose on the origin of the Anusilan Samiti as incorporated in the *Appendices* to B. N. Datta's *Bharater Dvitiya Swadhinatar Itihas*.

Also see *Anusilan Samitir Sankshipta Itihas* by Jibantara Haldar (1966 3rd edn)

14. Intelligence Branch Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. N. IV/209 of 1908.

following account has been furnished by Mr. J. E. Armstrong, Supdt. of Police, which is in general agreement with the information derived from other sources:

"The ostensible objects of the Samiti", writes Mr. Armstrong, "were declared to be 'the physical, moral and mental development of its members, boys and young men of the country, and to infuse a feeling of amity, fraternity and mutual sympathy among the people', and as in the Dacca Samiti so here, philanthropy was made a special object and members were sent out to beg for rice (*musti-bhiksha*) and distribute it to the poor, nurse the sick, volunteer their services at festivals and so forth. But physical culture and lathi-play were by far the most important business and the activities of the Calcutta Anusilan in this respect were by no means confined to Calcutta but extended to various districts of West and East Bengal. Bands of young men went about the country giving displays of sword and lathi-exercise, engaging in friendly rivalry with the boys of the places visited and founding branches, very much in the manner of the Dacca organization".<sup>15</sup>

A secret Police Report submitted in 1909 to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, states:

"The Anusilan Samiti was first heard of by the Bengal Special Branch in October 1905... One of the original vows of the Society was that when any Indian woman was offended by any European in the presence of a member of the Samiti, that member would be obliged to take revenge even at the cost of his own life". The same report goes on to state further that there was a secret circle within the Samiti, to which only Graduates and First Arts students were admitted. "Two to six students were to be taken from each college, their antecedents were verified and they were put to

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15. Mr. Armstrong's Introductory Note to the *History Of The Dacca Anusilan Samiti*, dated April 25, 1917.

a period of probation on the expiry of which they went through an initiation ceremony taking their oath lying flat on a human skeleton with a revolver in one hand and a Gita in the other . . . It is probable those initiated into the inner circle separated themselves from the more public body and formed one of the societies from which the anarchists have sprung".<sup>16</sup>

Following the Anti-Partition agitation of 1905 the activities of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti grew by leaps and bounds and the society became a most important recruiting agency of Bengali youths for secret work. The outward activities of the Samiti ceased from September, 1909 when it was declared illegal, but its inner spirit continued to influence the Bengali youths for more daring acts. After its formal dissolution, many of its members gradually clustered round the personality of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, a born leader and organizer.

#### *Jugantar* AS A REVOLUTIONARY ORGAN

There is still today a misconception among writers and scholars as to the relation of the *Jugantar* band of revolutionary workers of that period with the Anusilan Samiti. It is a gross mistake to conceive of the two groups of workers, ordinarily labelled as Anusilan and *Jugantar*, as representing two distinct political parties of a revolutionary character. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta who was the first editor of the *Jugantar* weekly (organ of the revolutionary party) has repeatedly stated both verbally and in writing that during 1905-1906 there was only one central revolutionary organization in Bengal with its local branches in various places under the general presidentship of P. Mitter. With the expansion in the size and activity

16. F. N. IV/209 of 1908 in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.

of the revolutionary organization a differentiation of functions, inevitable in the course of evolution, began to take place. While the larger body remained content with physical culture together with doses of political thought, a small band of workers belonging to the same organization addressed their mind to systematic political propaganda through a fit medium. Barin Ghose led this group which included Abinash Bhattacharya, Debabrata Bose, Bhupen Datta and others. Dissatisfied with the political propagandism of the existing rationalist papers in Bengal, they together founded in March, 1906 the Bengali weekly *Jugantar* to give voice to their revolutionary doctrines.<sup>17</sup> They believed that freedom is the birth-right of each nation and that a subject people must wade to freedom through a welter of blood. Their supreme object was to drive out the British from this country even by the most extreme methods. 'Kabuly medicine is the best medicine' was their constant cry. The following quotations from the *Jugantar* unmistakably reveal the unflinching candour with which the revolutionary doctrines were preached in this paper:

1. In an article published on April 7, 1907 the *Jugantar* observed: "In almost every country the people come to be divided into three parties before a revolution. One party turns traitor to the country and helps the established Government, the second party (and this consists of the majority of the population), though hankering after freedom and prepared to make some little sacrifice for attaining it, are unwilling to plunge into war for its sake, and the third party consists of men to whom life without freedom is a burden and who are willing even to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their ideal. It is gradually becoming necessary

17. U. and H. Mukherjee: *Swadeshi Andolan O Banglar Nabajuga* (Calcutta, 1961, Chapter VI).

to form a third party like this in every town and every village and link them together”

2. In its issue of May 5, 1907, the paper described the Englishmen as demons or *asurs* and characterised Minto and Hare as dangerous persons having no equal in the art of demoniac duplicity and finally observed: “Who calls you a tiger? Who calls you the British Lion? There are no tigers or lions in your country which contains only moles, jackals and dogs. In childhood we read of only these animals in your books and to-day in the field of politics, too, we are being acquainted with the self-same animals”.

In an article of June 9, 1907, the *Jugantar* gave direct incitement to violence by writing: “If it be lawful for an individual to use physical force for self-preservation, why should it be unlawful for a nation to do the same? If it be not a sin to commit manslaughter in order to defend oneself against thieves and dacoits, why should it be a sin to kill a few men in order that a nation might become free? War and similar things may or may not be good. But in the present state of man he has no escape from them. When war is necessary, it is cowardice to refuse to enter upon it”.

Again, in an article entitled “Lathi As Remedy”, the *Jugantar* observed on June 16, 1907 that the English bureaucrats did not understand the language of petition and peaceful agitation and that the people must be ready to apply the remedy which is always applied to fools. “The Kabuly medicine is indeed the best of medicines”.

In another article on “Dispelling Of Fear” the *Jugantar* observed on June 16, 1907: “In the course of the conversation a respected pandit said the other day that this vast British Empire was a huge sham, that it was a house without a foundation or a garland strung without a thread; that though it glittered and

looked so nice with its crimson hue, a slight pull or a little push would bring it down to fragments. But that it does not fall is due simply to our foolishness".<sup>18</sup>

Week after week the *Jugantar* began to pour out such revolutionary ideas as the above, and its language became more and more vituperative and violent. The alien bureaucracy raised its threatening fist to kill that paper. Within a short span of thirteen months (July, 1907—August, 1908) six prosecutions, one after another, were started against this journal.<sup>19</sup>

But prosecution and persecution failed to stop its publication. Finding the existing laws too inadequate for the purpose, the Government of India ultimately passed the new Press Law in June, 1908 to gag the voice of seditious journals among whom the *Jugantar*, in official estimation, stood the first and foremost. While introducing the Press Bill in the Legislative Council on June 8, 1908, Sir Harvey Adamson, the Law Member, made special reference to the subversive work carried on by the *Jugantar* when he said: "In spite of five prosecutions *Jugantar* still exists and is as violent as ever. The type of sedition has been incitement to subversion of British rule by deeds of violence, has been to court prosecution to create pseudo-martyrs ... I have up to this point confined myself to the *Jugantar* because it has already obtained so great notoriety that nothing that I can say can make it more notorious. But writings of a similar type abound in other newspapers not only in Calcutta but throughout India. I will not give any of these disreputable papers an advertisement by mentioning their names. . . . The only way to deal with such newspapers is to put an end

18. The above extracts from the *Jugantar* are taken from the articles which were exhibited in the first *Jugantar* prosecution in July, 1907. Vide *Bande Mataram* dated July 26, 1907 and July 28, 1907.

Home Poll. A Proceedings of the Govt. of India, June, 1908, Nos. 126-129 and Aug. 1908, Nos. 99-104.





to their existence, and this we propose to do in the Bill. . . ."<sup>20</sup>

#### THE MANICKTOLA GARDEN HOUSE

Side by side with the organization of the *Jugantar* weekly Barindra Kumar Ghose laid the foundations of a secret society (1907) at the Manicktola Garden House in North Calcutta (a property belonging to the four sons of Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose, father of Barin Ghose) where, apart from imparting moral and religious training to its members, the cult of revolutionary nationalism, patriotism and so forth was also preached, the ultimate object being the preparation of the country for entering into an armed conflict with the alien Government. Knowledge of history and politics of various countries was also disseminated among its members regularly. In the literature of the society the greatest place was occupied by *Bartaman Ramoniti* (a Bengali work by Barindra Kumar Ghose analysing the armed strength of the enemies and the methods to fight them out), *Mukti Kon Pathe* (comprising the most important articles of the *Jugantar* weekly) and a Bomb Manual (describing the formulae of bomb-making)—all being unearthed at the time of the search at the Garden House in May, 1908.<sup>21</sup> In the practical field, the society applied its mind to the collection of explosives, guns, revolvers, bombs, dynamites and various acids and chemicals as well as to the manufacture of bombs, particularly by Ullaskar Datta and Hem Chandra Das. Ullaskar Datta first started

20. *The Bengalee*, June 9, 1908 and *Bande Mataram* (Weekly Edition), June 14, 1908.

21. A copy of the same bomb manual was also discovered by the police during their search of the house of Ganesh Savarkar, brother of V. D. Savarkar, on March 2 1909. Mr. Ker, I.C.S., who had been P. A. to the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Govt. of India, during 1907-13, refers to it in his *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917* (Calcutta, 1917) as "60 pages of closely typed matter in English, which proved to be a copy of the same bomb manual of which a cyclostyled copy was found in the Manicktola garden. Savarkar's copy was more complete, as it contained 45 sketches of bombs mines and buildings to illustrate the text".

this sort of preparation secretly in his own house but soon a centre was opened for the purpose at 15, Gopi Mohan Datta Lane in North Calcutta. Hem Chandra Das soon imparted to the society his expert knowledge of bomb manufacture on his return from France in 1907. In the latter part of that year the early band of the *Jugantar* workers dissociated themselves from the management of the paper, devoting themselves wholeheartedly to secret plotting and conspiracy. By this time more than a dozen young men had clustered round Barindra Kumar at Manicktola. Between November, 1907 and April, 1908 these men were busy weaving their schemes of outrages for taking the lives of select officials who had made themselves notorious and obnoxious to the revolutionaries. Besides the two attempts at blowing off Sir Andrew Fraser's special trains near Chandernagore (November-December, 1907), a third attempt was also made to wreck his train at Narayanagarh near Kharagpur (December 6, 1907).<sup>22</sup> In each of these instances bombs and mines of Ullaskar's make were used. Two bombs of Hem Das's make were also used in April, 1908—one directed at the Mayor of French Chandernagore, and the other misdirected at two innocent English ladies at Muzaffarpur causing their deaths. Their actual prey was, however, Mr. Kingsford who escaped unhurt as if through providential intervention. This attempt to take the life of Mr. Kingsford was preceded by another futile attempt made by Barin Ghose's party in or about January, 1908 through the despatch to him of a book-bomb in the form of a parcel which was not opened at that time as Mr. Kingsford

22. The rail damaged in explosion on December 6, 1907 was brought to the Kharagpur Railway Workshop for preservation and is still lying near the Railway Test House, Kharagpur Workshop, bearing the following tablet:

"Rail Damaged In Explosion Near Narayanagarh  
Under The Special Train Of  
H. E. Sir Andrew Fraser K C I E  
Lieut-Governor of Bengal on 6-12-07".

was then out of Calcutta, and afterwards the matter was forgotten until its memory was revived in 1909 in course of the Alipore Bomb Case. It was discovered exactly in the book long lying unopened in the house of Mr. Kingsford and has been described by Muspratt-Williams, Chief Inspector of Explosives of the India Govt., as "a most destructive bomb, had it exploded".<sup>23</sup>

Following the Muzaffarpur bomb outrage the revolutionary centres in Calcutta came under bureaucratic fire and thunder. The nest of revolutionary conspiracy at Manicktola was broken and the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case was vigorously set on foot by the Government. Although Aurobindo Ghose was ultimately acquitted by the British Judge as the prosecution could not prove his guilt, yet the fact remains that his was the master brain behind the whole revolutionary campaign in Bengal. Official records of the time repeatedly affirm this view.

#### THE DACCA ANUSILAN SAMITI

The Dacca Anusilan Samiti was founded on November 3, 1905, at first as a branch of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, but soon it developed into an independent parallel institution. Its birth was the direct sequel of the fiery speeches of Barrister P. Mitter and Bipin Chandra Pal at Dacca and their exhortation to the young men to form a society of service and sacrifice. About eighty young men headed by Pulin Behari Das readily responded to the call and took the vow administered by P. Mitter. Mr. Armstrong in describing the occasion writes thus: "The manner of administering the vow was full of significance. P. Mitter held a sword with the point resting on the forehead of the postulant as he knelt and solemnly swore that if it were demanded of him, he was prepared to sacrifice even his life for

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23. I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, File No. IV/1085/1909.

the independence of the country. In this one act the whole mission and purpose of the Samiti is at once revealed and symbolized". Pulin Behari Das was appointed the 'Captain-General' of the Samiti for the sterling qualities of leadership which he abundantly possessed.

The Samiti had a humble beginning. On the first day when Pulin Das started his work, he found to his surprise that only one member had turned up.<sup>24</sup> But under his leadership the Samiti having its base at 50 Wari, Dacca, began to make rapid strides, enlisting new members and setting up branches all over Eastern Bengal and Assam. Speaking of its rapid development, Mr. F. C. Daly, Offg. D. I. G. (Police), Bengal, observed in 1909 that "the Dacca Anusilan Samiti was founded and carried on with the same ultimate object as the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, though the former was more rapid in its advance, more business-like in its organization, and more daring in its deeds, perhaps owing to the fact that the young Bengali of E. B. and Assam is generally ahead of the young Bengali of this province in natural audacity and physical courage".<sup>25</sup>

As regards the numerical strength of the Samiti, it has been reported that Pulin Das on his release from deportation informed Mr. Denham of the Intelligence Branch "that he had 1,000 members in Dacca town and between 20,000 and 30,000 members in various districts of East Bengal". About 600 branches were then in existence.

#### ITS ORGANIZATION AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The objects of the Dacca Anusilan Samiti were the same as those of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti,

24. *Biplabir Jiban-Darshan* by Pratul Chandra Ganguli. See *Prabasi*, Baisakh, 1368 B. S.

25. Mr. Daly's letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated September 11-12, 1909.

physical exercises, moral regeneration and philanthropic work forming a great part of its curriculum. But by far the greatest object of the Samiti was to subvert the British rule in India by a violent and terror-striking policy. This alone explains, according to the Intelligence Branch reports, "the ascetic training" of the members of the organization, "the laboriously practised *lathi*, dagger, and sword-play, boxing and jiu-jitsu, the military drill and training, the mock fights and competitions", in which prizes and medals were also distributed. Pulin Behari Das, who himself inspected the branch samitis, "instructed volunteers in archery and had discovered a formula for a deadly poison to be applied to arrow-heads".<sup>26</sup>

To the members of the Samiti two important vows were administered, viz., *Adya Pratijna* or the initial vow and *Anta Pratijna* or the final vow. "The former consisted of 21 separate promises, the most important being that the member would never sever his connection with the Samiti, would report any probability of harm to the Samiti and any case in which a member broke his vow, would obey the orders of the authorities and conceal nothing from them, and would never neglect gymnastics or drill or teach them to any non-member." "There was no secret about this vow, as printed copies of it were posted up at the various samitis for the information of the public. After having fulfilled the terms of the first vow a member was required to take the middle and then the final vow.

The final vow was concerned with serious matters and was not meant for publication. It contained six clauses :

"I. I will not disclose any secret matter of the Samiti to any one, and will never discuss these matters unnecessarily.

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26. The I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F.N. 1270/1913.

2. I will never act contrary to the system of work of the Samiti. I will always remain subject to the head of the Samiti. I will instantly and thoroughly carry out whatever orders he may pass from time to time.

3. I will never change my place of residence without informing the head about it. I will not keep secret from the head where and how I am at a particular time. I will instantly inform the head should the existence of any conspiracy against the Samiti come to my knowledge, and under his orders try to remedy it.

4. I will come back in obedience to the head's command, no matter in what state I may happen to be at the time. But if any serious physical or natural cause prevents me from turning up at the proper time, I will at once apply to the head, bringing the matter to his notice, and return as soon as the impediment is got over.

5. I will not consider any kind of work disgraceful . . . I will entirely rid myself of the fear of public censure. I will not cherish even a grain of the desire of attaining celebrity . . . .Caring neither for fame nor opprobrium and quite giving up wrangling and loquacity, I will go on discharging my duties with seriousness, patience and perseverance, and never shrink from exhibiting self-abnegation, self-sacrifice and liberality for the work of the Samiti.

6. I shall not be at liberty to teach those subjects with respect to which I may receive instruction in this Samiti, being bound by oath, to anyone save to those persons who are bound by oath as regards those subjects".

Besides these, there was a special vow too which was administered only to a select few who would take part in some daring act. The members took this vow before the goddess Kali, the symbol of *Shakti*.<sup>27</sup>

The Dacca Anusilan Samiti, with its headquarters at Dacca and a number of subordinate samitis in the mofussil, was a highly centralised organization. Pulin Behari Das was the life and soul of the Samiti with supreme command over the entire organization. "In the Central Samiti", write the Intelligence Branch reports, "nothing could be done without his orders. All correspondence had first to be read, guards were posted day and night, and severe punishments were inflicted for the least breach of the rules . . . It had elaborately drawn up forms for recording in the minutest detail the strength and degree of training of every village Samiti, the population, natural features of the village, and a map. It was believed that the Society was intended to work very secretly and quietly without any collision with the authorities until the deeply-laid plans were fully matured".<sup>28</sup> These topographical details were needed, writes Mr. Ker, "not only as a preparation for the guerilla warfare which the leaders hoped to set on foot, but for the less ambitious scheme of armed dacoities which they actually practised". Altogether 944 printed forms for recording the above details were discovered by the police. Three of them were found to have been filled in with carefully drawn maps attached to them.

In the literature of the Samiti the District Organization Scheme written by Naren Sen and Pratul Chandra Ganguli found a great place.<sup>29</sup> The scheme envisaged the idea of District Organizers working in districts with batch leaders under them, under the general command of the supreme head in charge of the entire administration of the Samiti. Copies of this document and of another entitled Rules For Member-

Also see Sri Trailokya Nath Chakravarty's *Jele Tris Bachar O Bharater Biplob Sangram* (Calcutta, 1963, 2nd edn.), pp. 13-15.

28. The I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. N. 1270/1913.

29. *Biplabir Jiban-Dorshan* by Pratul Chandra Ganguli as published serially in the *Prabasi*, 1368 B. S.

ship were seized by the police in connection with the Barisal Conspiracy Case (1913).<sup>30</sup> Besides this, another important document of the Dacca Anusilan Samiti was the *Paridarshak*. As Mr. Ker writes : "To keep the village samitis up to the mark paridarshaks (inspectors) were appointed, and five copies were found of a document called the *Paridarshak* in which their duties were laid down. Apparently it was too confidential to print as the copies were all in manuscript, one being in the handwriting of Pulin Behari Das himself. Those who were appointed inspectors received a formal authority under the signature of Pulin Behari Das . . . The *Paridarshak* indicates clearly how the Samiti was to be managed". In the third place, another essay in Pulin Behari's own handwriting and bearing on the subject of the 'total surrender of one's personal independence in the hands of a leader' was seized by the police. The essay emphasised the need for unity and cohesion as contributory to the growth and success of an institution and was intended to develop the Samiti into a militant body.<sup>31</sup> Thus from all sources it is clear that the Dacca Anusilan Samiti presented a picture of highly centralised organization with Pulin Behari Das as its supreme leader and commander.

During 1907-1908 the Dacca Anusilan Samiti committed and/or attempted to commit a number of violent acts including the attempt on the life of Mr. Allen at Goalundo (December 23, 1907), the District Magistrate of Dacca, the murder of Manasha Chakravarty who was originally a member of the Samiti but later turned out to be a spy (November 12, 1908) as well as the English Bazar dacoity (October 20, 1908) and the Naria Bazar dacoity (October 30, 1908) ; but by far the most daring

30. The I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. Nos. 9/1914 and 1268/1915. These files preserve these two documents even to this day.

31. The I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. N. 1270/1913.



act in the period under review was the 'Barrha dacoity (June 2, 1908) which was planned by Pulin Das but executed under the leadership of Ashutosh Das Gupta.<sup>32</sup> The skill and boldness displayed by the party in the operation of this dacoity proved to be a terror to the enemies. Not merely a sum of Rs. 26,000 was looted but also four men were killed and seven others wounded in the ensuing clash that took place between the party, on the one hand, and the villagers and the police, on the other. A graphic description of this dacoity has been furnished in *Jele Tris Bachar* by Trailokya Nath Chakravarty (*alias* Maharaj).

Towards the close of 1908 the Dacca Anusilan Samiti acquired special notoriety in the eyes of the Government which soon raised its mailed fist against it. Not merely the Samiti was soon banned under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, but also its Commander-General was deported under Regulation III of 1818 (December, 1908). But repressive acts instead of extinguishing lit new fire in the soul of its members who mostly went underground and continued to work from behind the scenes in silence. The release of their leader, Pulin Das, from jail in February, 1910 came to them as a mighty stimulus. Pulin Das soon reorganized the Samiti secretly and infused a fighting spirit into it. But before long the Government again directed its attack on it and tried to bind down most of its important members on charges of conspiracies.<sup>33</sup> Following the arrest of Pulin Das in the Dacca Conspiracy Case, the leadership of the Samiti passed for a brief period (1910-1911) into the hands of Makhan Lal Sen who without disapproving the "direct action" scheme of the Samiti was trying to reconstruct

32. Pratul Ganguli's *Biplabi Jiban-Darsan*.

33. The Dacca Conspiracy Case (July, 1910-April, 1912) and the Barisal Conspiracy Case (1913-14) followed by the Supplementary Barisal Conspiracy Case (1915) convicted altogether thirty men of the Samiti including Pulin Behari Das.

the Samiti after the model of the Ramkrishna Mission. The "Scheme Book Of The Revolutionary Organization In Bengal" written by him was a Bengali MSS covering about 100 pages, with headings of Dharma, Shiksha, Sebabrata, Naisa Sangeet, Naisa Vidyalaya, Gymnastic Club & Brahmacharya Ashram, and was described by the Intelligence Branch of Bengal as one "of a moral nature throughout". From Makhan Lal Sen the leadership soon passed into the hands of Naren Sen (later Naren Maharaj of the Ramkrishna Mission), after whom Pratul Ganguli, Trailokya Chakravarty, Ramesh Choudhury, Anukul Chakravarty, Nagen Datta (*alias* Girija Babu), Nalini Kanta Ghose etc., assumed the command of the Samiti at different stages. In their line of action they all stuck close to the tradition of Pulin Das.

At the beginning of 1912 the activities of the Anusilan Samiti got a new lease of life with the foundation of a centre of work in Calcutta. Supported by "ample funds" and "a well-equipped technical and intelligence department", the Samiti spread out its off-shoots all over Bengal and even in Bihar, U. P. and Madhya Pradesh.<sup>34</sup> It forged an alliance with the Chandernagore group of revolutionaries then headed by Moti Lal Roy (1912) and also came into contact with the Benares group led by Sachindra Nath Sanyal (1913). Besides, the Anusilan Samiti established its links with the Delhi and Punjab revolutionaries also

34. During the World War I Chandi Charan Nag and Bhabani Prasad Datta of the Dacca Anusilan Samiti went to Rangoon for organizational work. According to Sri Dinesh Biswas, an old member of the Anusilan Samiti who went to Burma in 1920-21 with the same end in view, Sanjeeb Mukherjee, Sumati Majumdar and others worked among the Burmese, and Kedareswar Bhattacharya, a school-master of Rangoon, had correspondence with Rash Behari Bose. Among the Burmese who joined the Anusilan Samiti the important were C. P. Khin Maung and U. Tin Maung. Dr. Ba Maw, Thakkin U Su and U. Saw had separate organizations aiming at freedom of Burma through violence and they were in intimate touch with the Anusilan Samiti.

through the medium of Rash Behari Bose whom Mr. Denham of the Intelligence Branch described as the "up-country agent" of Srish Chandra Ghose of Chandernagore. Thus a common net-work of revolutionary conspiracy was laid from the Punjab to Bengal in which the Anusilan Samiti formed an important link. It is not for nothing that Mr. Hughes Buller, I. G. of Police, wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal (January 6, 1914) : "The Maulvibazar case takes one to Dacca and Dacca leads to intimate association with Calcutta, and the occurrence at Lahore completes the circle of connection back to Sylhet again. And if the Lahore bomb is to be attributed to Bengal men, it is but a short step, in view of recent revelations, to connect East Bengal men through Calcutta with the Delhi bomb".

It is worth while to observe in this connection that except the manufacture of bomb shells through iron casting by Amrita Lal Hazra at his Rajabazar centre (296|1 Upper Circular Road), the Dacca Anusilan Samiti had no bomb manufacturing agency of its own and so it had to depend in the main on Chandernagore for the supply of bombs and revolvers. The main attention of the Samiti was focussed not on the manufacture of firearms but on the propagation of the cult of violence as well as on the actual commission of overt acts through its far-flung and will-knit organization. Political leaflets under the name of *Liberty* and *Swadhin Bharat* were issued by the Samiti from time to time. An issue of *Liberty* of 1913 declared the ideal of the Samiti in the following language:

"The *Liberty* has taken its birth at the present moment for the fulfilment of a Mission, ordained by the Almighty, and the ultimate object of it is to secure the independence of Mother India. . .

"Therefore, O, brothers, Bharats, throw off the lethargy of the thousand years and come sharp under

the banner of the Mahashakti, so that you may become Suddha, Siddha and Mukta. And God's will can then be performed through you like those of the Delhi, College Square and the Mymensingh Lilas". The *Swadhin Bharat* (first edition) sent a call to Indian youths to come forward and face death to extirpate the blood-sucking demons from the mother country. Those police and C. I. D. men, or *tiktikis* as they were called by the revolutionaries, standing as impediments to this great work must be removed from the scene by the extreme method. The leaflet eulogized secret murder as a holy act on the part of an enslaved people. The occasional publication of such seditious leaflets drew the serious attention of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, who in his letter to the Secretary to the Government of India (Home Deptt.), thus commented (February 6, 1914): "Their appearance has been persistent and unabated; and throughout the past year they have been circulated in the Bengal Presidency and have been found so far afield as the Punjab, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces. Publication work forms one of the basic features of the present movement, and the seditious leaflet continues to be one of the most dangerous weapons systematically employed against the Government".

The important overt acts committed by the Dacca Anusilan Samiti during 1912-1918 is furnished in the following table:<sup>35</sup>

35. The above list has been prepared with the help of different charts provided in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, *Index To Notes On Outrages Compiled In 1917* by J. C. Nixon, I.C.S., Vol. VIII as well as with the help of the information supplied by some members of the Dacca Anusilan Samiti such as Sarbasri Anukul Chakravarty, Amrita Sarkar, Nalini Kanta Ghose, Manindra Nath Roy etc. Published books and essays like *Jele Tris Bachar*, *Biplabir Jiban-Darshan*, *Biplabi Jiban*, *Benglay Biblab-bad* etc., have also been drawn upon for the same purpose.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Nature* of the Act</i>
1. Sept. 24, 1912	Goalnagar, Dacca town	Head Constable Rati Lal Roy shot dead by a party consisting of Trailokya Chakravarty, Pratul Ganguli and Biren Chatterjee.
2. Nov. 14, 1912	Nangalbandh, Dacca	Dacoity: Rs. 16,000 looted.
3. Jan. 13, 1913	Comilla, Tipperah	Murder of Debendra Kumar Ghose, a political suspect, by revolver.
4. Feb. 3, 1913	Bharakair, Dacca	Dacoity: Rs. 3,400 looted.
5. Feb. 4, 1913	Dhuldia, Mymensingh	Dacoity: Rs. 9,046 looted. Amrita Sarkar wounded by shots from Jogendra Bhattacharya's revolver.
6. March 27, 1913	Maulvibazar, Sylhet	Attempted assassination of Mr. Gordon, S.D.O. Jogendra Chakravarty died by bomb explosion. The party consisted of Amrita Sarkar, Lal Mohan De and Tara Prasanna Bal and Jogen Chakravarty. Chandernagore bomb used. Amrita Sarkar and Tara Prasanna Bal were also injured.
7. Sept. 29, 1913	College Sq., Calcutta	Murder of Head Constable Haripada Deb by revolver. Participants—Pratul Ganguli, Rabi Sen and Nitmal Roy.
8. Sept. 30, 1913	Mymensingh	Bankim Choudhury in the employ of the police killed by bomb explosion. Party consisted of Amrita Sarkar and Anukul Chakravarty. Bomb thrown by Amrita Sarkar.
9. Nov. 16, 1913	Banglabazar, Dacca	Basanta Bhattacharya, a police officer, shot dead by a party

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Nature of the Act</i>
		consisting of Anukul Chakravarty and Aditya Datta. Anukul Chakravarty fired.
10. Jan. 19, 1914	Grey Street and Sovabazar junction, Calcutta	Inspector Nripendra Nath Ghose shot dead by Nirmal Kanta Roy.
11. June 19, 1914	Sadar Ghat Road, Chittagong town	Nagen Roy, an informer in the Dacca Conspiracy Case, aimed at, but Satyen Sen instead died by revolver shot by Pratul Ganguli and helped by Nalini Kanta Ghose and Jogendra Bhattacharya ( <i>alias</i> Jyoti).
12. July 19, 1914	Buckland Band, Dacca	Informer Ram Das, originally a member of the Anusilan Samiti and later joining Purna Das's party, shot dead by Amrita Sarkar, assisted by Anukul Chakravarty, Girija Babu and Biren Chatterjee. It was before sunset when a number of police men in plain dress along with Ram Das were loitering on the Buckland Band to detect the 'marked' Anusilan Samiti men that the murder took place. Basanta Chatterjee with a large police force was waiting in a boat on the <i>Buriganga</i> . Just at that time the party of four, all armed, appeared on the Band. Ram Das missed their sight and turned about when Amrita Sarkar shot at him from the side. B. Chatterjee and his men jumped into the river. It was a most daring act, as the Band was very much crowded at that time.
13. Nov. 2, 1914	Greer Park, Calcutta	Naren Sen and Biren Chatterjee -arrested by the police after

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Nature of the Act</i>
		offering tough resistance. The wrist of Lowman was broken by Biren Chatterjee.
14. Nov. 25, 1914	Mussalmanpara Lane, Calcutta	Two bombs thrown into the house of Dy. Supdt. Basanta Chatterjee. A Head Constable killed and two constables and a relative of B. K. Chatterjee dangerously wounded. Nagen Sen found lying in Akhil Mistry's Lane seriously wounded by a bomb explosion, with a loaded Webley revolver by his side. The plan formulated by Trailokya Chakravarty and to be executed in two stages. The first batch would kill Basanta Chatterjee which would force Tegart on the scene, and the second batch would then kill him. Chandernagore bombs and Mauser pistols secured for the purpose. In practice, the first batch consisting of Nagen Sen, Kali Maitra, Satis Pakrasi ( <i>alias</i> Barin), Prafulla Biswas and another man went with bombs, but as they missed the target, injuring Nagen Sen, Kali Maitra and Satis Pakrasi, the second part of the scheme was abandoned. Kali Maitra was treated at Atul Krishna Ghose's house at 2, Chidam Mudi Lane by Jadugopal Mukherjee, then a medical student. Satis Pakrasi received wounds on his right ankle.
15. Feb. 20, 1915	Dharail, Rajsahi	Dacoity with murder: Rs. 25,000 looted.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Nature of the Act</i>
16. Oct. 9, 1915	Mymensingh	Dy. Suptd. of Police Jatindra Mohan Ghose shot dead. His son also killed.
17. June 30, 1916	Sambhunath Pandit Road, Fhowanipore, Calcutta	Murder of Dy. Supdt. Basanta Chatterjee by a party of five, viz., Suresh Chakravarty, Probodh Biswas, Atin Roy Choudhury of Comilla, Sisir Ghose and Mohini Bhattacharya by means of revolver and Mauser pistols. Firing done by Suresh and Atin, the other three keeping on guard. B. K. Chatterjee's guard also succumbed to his injuries.
18. Sept. 11, 1916	Laliteswar, Tipperah	Dacoity with murder: Rs. 530 looted. Clash with villagers: five villagers killed and five wounded. Probodh Bhattacharya, according to Mr. Nixon, captured by the villagers and beaten to death. Probhas Lahiri of the Anusilan Samiti states that Bhattacharya died of snake biting.
19. Jan. 9 and 11, 1918	Cauhati, Assam	Armed fight between the Anusilan Samiti men and the police party at the Atgaon house and near the Nabagraha Hill at Gauhati. Nalini Kanta Ghose, Probhas Chandra Lahiri, Manindra Nath Roy, Narendra Nath Banerjee (of Benares Consp. Case) and another member arrested while Nalini Bagchi, Probodh Das Gupta and Amarendra Nath Chatterjee escaped. Casualties found on both sides.
20. May 8, 1918	Bogra town	Murder of S. I. Haridas Maitra by Nikunja Pal.



<i>Date</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Nature of the Act</i>
21. May 27, 1918	Atgharia, Pabna	Armed resistance by Nikunja Pal to the police. Nikunja Pal arrested.
22. June 15, 1918	Kalta Bazar, Dacca	On the morning of June 15 armed police officers and men raided No. 28 Kalta Bazar. Tarini Majumdar and Nalini Bagchi offered armed resistance with Mauser pistols, but were overwhelmed by the police. Tarini Majumdar killed on the spot, while Nalini Bagchi fatally wounded and he died in hospital. The third man Hari Chaitanya De was arrested. S. I. Basanta Mukherjee seriously wounded and the Head Constable succumbed to his wounds.

#### CHANDERNAGORE AS A CENTRE OF REVOLUTIONARY CONSPIRACY

After the break-up of the Manicktola revolutionary centre (1908) and the proclamation of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti as unlawful (September, 1909) Chandernagore became the focal point of revolutionary conspiracy in Western Bengal. As early as 1902 a society for physical, mental and moral culture, called the Bandhab Sammilani, was founded at Gondalpara through the initiative of Narendra Nath Banerjee, Upendra Nath Banerjee and Basanta Kumar Banerjee. Srish Chandra Ghose of Fatakgora, who later acquired the distinction of being the most daring and dangerous of the Chandernagore revolutionaries, was also connected with the Sammilani almost from the outset. When the Swadeshi Movement began to stir the country, the activities of the Bandhab Sammilani naturally expanded, drawing new followers like

Jyotish Chandra Ghose of Cinsurah, Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpura and Hrishikesh Kanjilal of Serampore. Among the young men who had joined the Sammilani Upen Banerjee occupied a very important position. He had some literary talents and used them in the service of the motherland. He contributed several interesting articles to the *Jugantar* weekly and was also connected, at one stage, with the *Bande Mataram* daily as an assistant Editor. Gradually he developed intimacy with Barindra Kumar Ghose and joined the Manicktola secret society (1907) of which the latter was the guiding spirit. He belonged to the inner circle of the Manicktola revolutionaries and was mainly in charge of imparting religious and moral training to its inmates. At about the same time an inner circle also grew within the Bandhab Sammilani with its headquarters at the residence of Narendra Nath Banerjee. Its members received lessons in revolver shooting from Professor Charu Chandra Roy of the College Dupleix, who had done much to inspire the Chandernagore people with the spirit of Indian nationalism. It was in this *milieu* that these young men picked up intimacy with Kanai Lal Datta, a pupil of Charu Roy and also a member of his majlis.<sup>36</sup>

It is well to remember that Kanai Lal Datta, before he had left Chandernagore after his B. A. Examination in 1908, to join the Manicktola centre, had also organized an *akhra* of physical exercises in his own house with a number of young men associated with it. Murtaza, a Turko-European of Calcutta, came to this *akhra* from time to time to teach sword-play to the boys of the club. Gradually provisions were also made under the chairmanship of Moti Lal Roy for moral and intellectual discussions every Sunday.<sup>37</sup>

After the arrest of Kanai Lal Datta in connection with the Manicktola conspiracy, his work at Chandernagore was earnestly taken up by Moti Lal Roy who, in collaboration with Srish Chandra Ghose, Amarendra Nath Chatterjee and Baburam Paradkar (nephew of Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar) founded the nucleus of another secret society at Borai Chanditola in May, 1908.<sup>38</sup> Srish Ghose functioned from the beginning as the liaison between the Gondalpara and Borai Chanditola revolutionary centres.

The first important act of the Chandernagore revolutionaries was the supply of two revolvers to the Alipore Jail at the request of Kanai Lal Datta for the object of ending the life of Narendra Nath Gossain, the approver. Moti Lal Roy, on being supplied with two revolvers by Srish Chandra Ghose at Chandernagore, deposited them at Basanta Kumar Banerjee's house in Calcutta, and they were delivered in due course to Kanai Lal Datta and Upendra Nath Banerjee in the jail by Srish Chandra Ghose and Basanta Kumar Banerjee respectively.<sup>39</sup> The intended object of killing Naren Gossain was carried through successfully in the Alipore Jail Hospital (August 31, 1908) by Kanai Lal Datta of Chandernagore and Satyendra Nath Bose of Midnapore. Both of them were hanged eventually on charge of murder.

Another great service rendered by Chandernagore to the cause of revolution was the offer of an asylum to Aurobindo Ghose, an exile from British India in February, 1910 following the issue of a warrant of arrest against him on account of his signed article "To

"My Countrymen" published in the *Karmayogin* on December 25, 1909. Aurobindo came to Chandernagore suddenly and without notice. "Moti Lal Roy received him first in his own house, then arranged in other places, allowing only a few to know".<sup>40</sup> Aurobindo lived at Chandernagore in complete secrecy for about a month and a half (February 15—March 31, 1910), and then he decided to leave for Pondicherry, the headquarters of the French settlement in India. While Moti Lal Roy arranged to escort him from Chandernagore to Ariadaha-Agarpara, Amarendra Nath Chatterjee had him escorted from that place to Calcutta where in collaboration with Sukumar Mitra and Nagendra Kumar Guha Roy he managed to have Aurobindo board s. s. *Dupleix* which steamed off from the Calcutta port on April 1, 1910.<sup>41</sup>

After Aurobindo's departure from Chandernagore an important overt act committed under the influence of Chandernagore secret societies was the throwing of a bomb at Mr. Cowley (but actually meant for Mr. Denham) at the Writers Building (March 2, 1911) by Nani Gopal Mukherjee who was a recruit of Prof. Jyotish Ghose and who had earlier shot dead Head Constable Srish Chandra Chakravarty on February 21, 1911. In connection with this bomb outrage Nani Gopal was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation while Srish Ghose, Naren Banerjee and Jyotish Ghose were released after initial arrest. It was Srish Ghose who had supplied the bomb made by Suresh Datta, and it was Naren Banerjee who accompanied Nani Gopal to the Writers Building. As Srish Ghose was the principal brain behind the Dalhousie Square bomb outrage and as Jyotish Ghose was a 'corruptor of youths', Mr. Morshead, the then I. G. of Police, recommended for their deportation under Regulation III of 1818 to the Government of Bengal and requested the latter to move the matter with the Government of India.<sup>42</sup>

From 1910-1911 the organization of Moti Lal Roy began to acquire greater importance on account of its intimate link with the wider revolutionary movement now going on in the country. Before long it became the chief centre of bomb manufacture in Bengal. There were five centres of bomb manufacture and stock-piling in Chandernagore, viz., Rash Behari Bose's house at Fatakgora, Moti Lal Roy's house at Borai Chanditola, Manindra Nath Naik's house in

portion of which was donated by the Dacca Anusilan Samiti.<sup>44</sup> Aurobindo received a large sum of money also from his friend Barrister C. R. Das for translating the latter's Bengali poetical work *Sagar Sangeet* into English.

Apart from associating themselves with the general scheme of revolution in India under the leadership of Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, the Chandernagore revolutionaries led by Moti Lal Roy rendered a signal service to the cause of revolution by providing asylum from time to time to a large number of Anusilan and Jugantar workers until the Amnesty was declared in December, 1919.<sup>45</sup> With reference to Moti Lal Roy Mr. Tegart wrote in 1917: "This man is an important revolutionary leader, who generally controls and advises both the Eastern and Western Bengal Sections and also keeps in touch with the sister organisations in other parts of India, particularly the United Provinces and the Punjab".<sup>46</sup>

Another important episode connected with the

44. Both Sri Anukul Chakravarty and Sri Nalini Kanta Ghose testify to the regular payment of money by the Anusilan Samiti to Moti Lal Roy for disbursement to Aurobindo Ghose in Pondicherry. Even Mr. Armstrong in his *History Of The Dacca Anusilan Samiti* has stated in 1917 that "Aurobindo in his retreat in Pondicherry is to the present day in receipt of funds specially provided by the Dacca Anusilan Samiti for his support".

45. The terms 'Anusilan' and 'Jugantar' have been used here in the sense of the Dacca Anusilan Samiti and the most of the non-Dacca Anusilan groups in Bengal. Mr Armstrong in 1917 wrote in this context the following:

"The Dacca Anusilan Samiti had acquired such great influence and numerical strength and was so well organized and disciplined that, although its leaders and those of 'the other party', both in Calcutta and the mufassal, have been in constant touch, it has continued to retain its separate individuality and organization more or less unimpaired.

Broadly speaking, therefore in the revolutionary society in Bengal there are two main divisions—the Jugantar and the Dacca Anusilan. The generic name 'Jugantar' is now seldom heard, but it seems appropriate and historically justifiable, and if found to be of general application to all non-Dacca Anusilan organizations in Bengal, its wider use would perhaps simplify matters and provide a satisfactory nomenclature".

46. Vide F. N. 2210/16 in the I. B. Records (W. B.).

Chandernagore revolutionaries was the despatch of Volunteers during the World War I to the battle-field in France under the inspiration of Moti Lal Roy. After the Government of India had gone back upon their earlier invitation of 2000 Bengalis to serve as an Ambulance Corps in the war (August, 1914), Chandernagore set the stage for the Bengalis for fighting in open battle-field in Europe. In response to the French Government's notification dated December 30, 1915 Chandernagore sent Bengali Volunteers, numbering twenty-five, led by Haradhan Bakshi and Shidheswar Mallick, to France, *via* Pondicherry and Tunis for military training. The excellent military talent which they exhibited in the battle-field of Verdun brought for them very high appreciation even from the French General.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE THEFT OF RODDA'S ARMS

Of all the overt acts committed by the Bengal revolutionaries during the World War I nothing seems more daring and dramatic than the theft of Rodda's arms effected on August 26, 1914. The revolutionaries of the time had to carry on their activities under certain basic limitations, particularly the shortage of funds and that of arms. To make up the deficiency of the first kind political dacoities were often resorted to. But money alone was not sufficient; what they needed most to carry through their project was armed strength. After the dissolution of the Manicktola centre difficulties for the revolutionaries were augmented all the more. French Chandernagore now remained the only centre of bomb manufacture, but even there the watch dogs of the bureaucracy were making the situation more and more difficult. Besides the manufacture of

47. Moti Lal Roy: *Jiban Sangini* (Calcutta, 2nd edn., 1952) pp. 334-36 and 397-98.

bombs, the revolutionaries were secretly engaged in securing revolvers and pistols generally from individuals through forcible seizure or by theft, or from the Anglo-Indians or the Chinese or the Italian and other sailors and crew through purchase. Two other sources of which mention has been found in the I. B. Records, were one Nur Khan of Chetla, a dealer in firearms, from whom revolvers were purchased by Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee through Charu Ghose of Chetla, and Kishori Mohan Sapui, an important businessman of Chandernagore who used to import revolvers regularly from France, a portion of which went to the hands of the revolutionaries.<sup>48</sup> Notwithstanding all these, the supply of arms for the revolutionaries was hopelessly inadequate for their ambitious projects. The outbreak of the World War I opened up before them new opportunities of work, and they were now up and doing in securing arms by any means whatsoever. It is in this psycho-political background that a consignment of arms from Messrs Rodda & Co., one of the most important dealers in arms in Calcutta, was dramatically stolen by the revolutionaries in broad daylight from the streets of Calcutta. The episode was not only interesting but important too. The arms thus secured strengthened the hands of the revolutionaries to a very large extent and played a great role in their activities of the future. The successful theft gave them the possession of a large number of Mauser pistols which, when fitted with their wooden cases, worked as good as rifles and were much more powerful both in range and potency than the ordinary revolvers used by the police at that time.

The chief actor in the Rodda conspiracy was Srish Pal *alias* Naren who found valuable collaborators in

48. See the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal (F. N. 757/13) and *Amar Dekha Biplab O Biplabi*, p. 100.



Haridas Datta of the Mukti Sangha as well as in Anukul Mukherjee, Harish Sikdar, Bipin Ganguli, Bhujanga Dhar and Srish Mitra *alias* Habu of the Attonnati Samiti<sup>49</sup>. It is because of this closeness of relation between the Mukti Sangha and the Attonnati Samiti that Mr. Tegart writes in his report on Rangpur in 1915: "Our enquiries showed that the members of Hem Ghose's party had amalgamated in Calcutta with the remnants of the old Attonnati Samiti".<sup>50</sup>

By the middle of 1914 these two parties came under the sharp notice of the police, particularly after the attempted murder of Mr. O' Brien, an engineer of the Alexandra Jute Mill of Jagaddal on the eastern bank of the Ganges (just opposite to Chandernagore), who had kicked to death an employee of the Mill and had received in return a nominal fine of Rs. 50. The insult was too much for the revolutionaries to stand without offering a fit counter blow. Hem Ghose, Srish Pal, Harish Sikdar and Anukul Mukherjee, after consultation among themselves, deputed Haridas Datta of Rangpur and Khagen Das of Comilla, both belonging to the Mukti Sangha, to avenge the death of the unfortunate clerk referred to above by killing Mr. O' Brien. With this object in view these two men secured jobs in beam in the Alexandra Jute Mill at the monthly rate of Rs. 22/- each and also became the *majhis* of the boat of Mr. O' Brien taking him every night to and from Chandernagore. But at the final stage the conspiracy fell through as the I. B. Watchers could sense the plot and get some of the conspirators arrested.

The failure of the O' Brien murder conspiracy (March-May, 1914) was followed by the Rodda's arms theft conspiracy (August, 1914). On information

49. For the genesis and early organization of the Attonnati Samiti and the Mukti Sangha see the *Appendices*.

50. Tegart's printed note on the revolutionary movement in Rangpur, dated March 1, 1915.

being supplied by Srish Mitra (*alias* Habu), Custom's Sircar of Messrs Rodda & Co. and a follower of Anukul Mukherjee, that a large consignment of German Mausers had arrived at Calcutta for Rodda & Co., Srish Pal (*alias* Naren) and Anukul Mukherjee summoned a secret meeting of the various groups of revolutionaries on August 24, 1914 at a small park in the *Chatawala Gali* between 9 and 10 P. M. Besides the conveners, others present in the meeting were Haridas Datta, Khagen Das, Naren Bhattacharya (*alias* M. N. Roy), Naren Ghose Choudhury, Srish Mitra, Biman Ghose (who later became Doctor at London), Jagat Gupta, Suresh Chakravarty (Barisal) and Ashu Roy (Pabna).<sup>51</sup> Considering the plot to be an obvious absurdity, Naren Bhattacharya and Naren Ghose Choudhury could not approve the design and left the meeting soon after its commencement. Others present gave their consent whereupon Srish Pal allotted to each his share of work on the date of occurrence scheduled for August 26, 1914. Suresh Chakravarty, Biman Ghose, Jagat Gupta and Ashu Roy were entrusted with keeping watch over the I. B. personnel in the vicinity of the Dalhousie Square, and if any danger from them was remotely sensed, Suresh Chakravarty, Biman Ghose and Jagat Gupta would then immediately supply information to Ashu Roy who, an adept in singing, would communicate the warning to Srish Pal, Khagen Das and Haridas Datta by singing. After this the meeting dispersed, and the ringleaders, viz., Srish Pal, Anukul Mukherjee, Haridas Datta and Khagen Das, assembled at Srish Mitra's house in Srinath Das's Lane at Bowbazar. The plan was then finalised. The role

51. Of these Srish Pal, Haridas Datta and Khagen Das belonged to the Mukti Sangha, Anukul Mukherjee, Srish Mitra, Biman Ghosh, Jagat Gupta and Ashu Roy belonged to the Attonnati Samiti, Naren Ghosh Choudhury and Suresh Chakravarty belonged to the Barisal party and Naren Bhattacharya to the party led by Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee.

assigned to Anukul Mukherjee was to supply a cart driven by a stout up-country bullock. Haridas Datta, assuming the role of a dumb Hindusthani *Garwan*<sup>52</sup>, would take the cart to the Dalhousie Square at about 12 noon wherefrom Srish Mitra would catch it after scolding the *Garwan* for his delay, as if it had been hired by Srish Mitra beforehand. Srish Mitra, it was so planned, would then escort the cart to the Custom's House along with six other carts driven mostly by buffalos, would take delivery of arms and ammunition and load the carts with them, the particular one to be loaded to its utmost capacity by Mauser pistols, ammunition and other spare parts. Srish Pal and Khagen Das would go on both sides of Haridas Datta giving guard to him all along the route.

According to plan, next day after dusk Haridas Datta cut his hair after the fashion of a Hindusthani, wore an unclean short cloth and a genji and also had a brass locket on a black car fastened round his neck, thus visibly appearing as a typical Hindusthani *Garwan* (driver).

In the morning of August 26, 1914, about 9 o'clock, Anukul Mukherjee, Srish Pal, Srish Mitra, Haridas Datta and Khagen Das again met in the house of Anath Kaviraj at Malanga Lane (near Anukul Mukherjee's house at 29, Malanga Lane) to have their last-minute talks and to give finishing touch to their preparations. Haridas Datta, Khagen Das and Srish Pal were then supplied with three loaded revolvers. A cart was brought by Anukul Mukherjee and a *Sabal* was put on it to meet any untoward event. It was decided that if they were detected and opposed by the police, Srish Pal and Khagn Das would start firing, and in the

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52. Haridas Datta was an expert cart-driver from his very boyhood. His family at Rangpur owned two carts for the conduct of its business. Although he could speak Hindi well, yet his dumbness was necessitated lest his pronunciation and accents should give clues to the enemies.

meantime Haridas Datta would open a packed wooden box of Mausers by means of the *Sabal* and provide Srish Pal, Khagen Das and himself with three Mauser pistols. The mechanism of Mausers had already been explained to Haridas Datta by Srish Pal. After this Srish Mitra left the meeting in order to appear in office in right time.<sup>53</sup>

Mr. Tegart in his note, dated August 29, 1914, has written the following :

"Rodda & Co. cleared 202 boxes of goods from Customs godown ex. s. s. 'Ta Ctician'. They were taken delivery of by Rodda's Customs Babu Srish Chandra Mitra on 26th and laden on 7 carts at Jetties : 6 carts arrived, 7th cart containing 10 packages is missing . . . Rodda's Custom clerk S. Mitra has absconded since Wednesday 26th".

In another note, dated September 1, 1914 written to Mr. Colson, Mr. Tegart reveals further information:

"8 cases Kynoch's Mauser cartridges marked RBR, Nos. 396-403, each box contains 5,000 cartridges; 1 case marked RBR, containing 6000 cartridges. 1 case marked RBR 828, containing 50 Mauser pistols, large size, stolen on Wednesday the 26th.

"The gang responsible for this theft is connected with Hem Ghose's party in Dacca. . . The cartridge boxes measure (small boxes) 2' 6" by 1' 6", and weigh 1½ mds. each. (big boxes) 4' by 2' 6", and weigh 2½ mds. each.<sup>54</sup>

As to the conspiracy leading to the theft Tegart writes further :

"The conspiracy which culminated in this theft commenced in March 1914, when we received information from a confidential source to the effect that two prominent members of Hem Ghose's party, named Haridas Datta and Khagen Das, had been sent to

Calcutta by Hem Ghose with object of 'arranging an assassination on behalf of the revolutionary party'.<sup>55</sup>

According to Sri Haridas Datta of Hem Ghose's party (Mukti Sangha), the cart driven by him followed the six other carts from the Custom's House to Rodda's office at the Dalhousie Square and then proceeded through Mango Lane, British Indian Street, Bentinck Street and Malanga Lane and safely unloaded the wooden boxes in the waste iron stock-yard of Kanti Mukherjee, a friend of Anukul Mukherjee, at Malanga Lane, where Anukul Mukherjee of the Attonnati Samiti took delivery of the goods. Srish Mitra *alias* Habu hurriedly joined the party midway after having given delivery of six cart-loads of arms to the office, and then left Calcutta in company of Srish Pal that very evening by the Darjeeling Mail. Srish Pal kept Habu under the care of Dr. Surendra Bardhan of the Mukti Sangha at the Nageswari village in the Rangpur district and returned to Calcutta by the next mail.<sup>56</sup>

The stolen packages were soon removed from Kanti Mukherjee's iron stock-yard to the junction of Hideram Banerjee Lane and Jellepara Lane at Bow-bazer in a hackney carriage. Sri Satis De, then residing at Dixon Lane, under instruction from Bipin Behari Ganguli, went to the spot in the evening accompanied by Basanta Das and Jagat Gupta, all of them having coolie dresses on.<sup>57</sup> They removed the boxes to Bhujanga Dhar's house at 3 Jellepara Lane, and kept

them in a small room on the ground floor under the stair case. These three men together with Bhujanga Dhar worked in that room till midnight, transferring the arms and ammunition to a number of new steel trunks already brought there and burning the original packages and papers to ashes, and everything was immediately cleaned to avoid anybody's suspicion.

From the house of Bhujanga Dhar the boxes containing arms and ammunition were distributed from next morning to different revolutionary groups at various centres under the direction of Bipin Ganguli, Harish Sikdar and Anukul Mukherjee. The exact nature of the distribution of the Mausers and cartridges is not easy to ascertain at this stage. But the information gathered from different sources furnishes some clues as to the distribution of the stolen arms.

Jadugopal Mukherjee removed one trunk containing a number of Mausers the next night in a *gharri* (hackney carriage) to Nirjharini Sarkar's house at the Shyambazar Street for its delivery to Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. Naren Ghose Choudhury, the leader of the Barisal party, also secured a portion of Rodda's stolen arms and ammunition. Sri Ranen Ganguli transported a number of them from one place to another in Calcutta by motor cars of his own workshop and carried one box to Nalhati in the Birbhum district, keeping it with Nibaran Ghatak and his aunt Dukari Devi.<sup>58</sup> Haridas Datta and Srish Pal also arranged for the safe custody of about 21,000 ammunition contained in 11 wooden boxes first kept in a hired room near Jorabagan Thana, and then in a Marwari widow's house near Barrabazar from which centre Haridas Datta was arrested in October of 1914. A large number of cartridges went also to Chandernagore.

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58. The fact has been derived from Sri Ranen Ganguli and it finds corroboration in official records too.

On information received from Calcutta Moti Lal Roy, in consultation with Srish Chandra Ghose, sent two of his faithful associates, Satya Karmakar and his brother Bhola (or Rameswar De?) to Calcutta to receive a portion of Rodda's consignments from a godown in Cotton Street. These two men, subsequently joined by Amar Roy at Calcutta, carried three trunks of arms and ammunition from the Cotton Street godown to Chandernagore via Ghugudanga and Shyamnagar. The munitions were transferred from packed wooden boxes to newly purchased trunks that were brought to Chandernagore<sup>59</sup>. These facts suggest that the containers of Rodda's arms and ammunition had to be changed more than once while they were in the process of transit. A few Marwari friends of the revolutionaries, viz., Prabhudayal Himmatsinka, Fulchand etc., also took some important part in the disbursement of Rodda's arms.

These stolen Mauser pistols were gradually distributed throughout Bengal and even beyond, and came to be used in most of the violent incidents that took place since then. While commenting on this in his report dated February 18, 1915, Mr. Huges Buller, the I. G. of Police, Calcutta, wrote as follows :

"We have every reason to believe therefore that these Mauser pistols have been distributed among the anarchists throughout the Province, and as they now possess 20,000 rounds of ammunition, (*the rest having been captured by the police or used by the revolutionaries*) it is difficult to exaggerate the danger to which officials, police and the public are exposed. A Mauser

59. *Amar Dekha Biplab O Biplabi* by Moti Lal Roy and the writer's interview with Sri Amar Roy of the Globe Nursery. According to Moti Lal Roy, Bhola Karmakar of Chandernagore accompanied the party while Amar Roy mentions the name of Rameswar De instead. Sri Satya Karmakar, however, cannot remember whether his brother Bhola went with him. .

pistol is sighted up to 500 yards and if held straight, is a very formidable weapon".<sup>60</sup>

This "very formidable weapon" of H. Buller's description proved to be a highly valuable asset to the revolutionaries. Rash Behari Bose carried one such pistol as a defensive weapon since the Lahore conspiracy of 1915. He delivered it to Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Girija Babu on the eve of his departure from India for Japan. In 1915 the Mauser pistols came to play an important role in the historic Balasore fight in which Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee and others laid down their lives. Among the other incidents in which the Mauser pistols were used by the revolutionaries may be mentioned the following:<sup>61</sup>

- |                  |                       |  |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Kalamridha,   | District Faridpur,    | January 20, 1915<br>(looted booty Nil).                                  |
| 2. Bagmara,      | District Tippera,     | January 22, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 4,170).                            |
| 3. Kurul,        | District Rangpur,     | January 23, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 50,000).                           |
| 4. Garden Reach, | Calcutta,             | February 12, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 18,000).                          |
| 5. Dharail,      | District Rajsahi,     | February 20, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 25,000<br>murder also committed). |
| 6. Beliaghata,   | Calcutta,             | February 22, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 22,000<br>murder also committed). |
| 7. Areadah,      | District 24-Parganas, | April 6, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 500).                                 |
| 8. Balda,        | District Tippera,     | April 11, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 4,000).                              |
| 9. Pragpur,      | District Nadia,       | April 30, 1915<br>(looted booty Rs. 2,700).                              |

60. Report by Mr. R. Hughes-Buller, Inspector General of Police (Bengal), dated February 18, 1915 (F. N. 229/15).

61. See F. Nos. 757/17 and 1647/17 in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.



10. Aural, District May 25, 1915  
Tippera, (looted booty Rs. 4,250).
11. Gazipura, District June 5, 1915  
Bakarganj, (looted booty Rs. 15,000).
12. Haripur, District August 14, 1915  
Tippera, (looted booty Rs. 18,000  
murder also committed).
13. Chandra- District September 7, 1915  
kona, Mymensingh, (looted booty Rs. 20,984).
14. Chasa- District September 9, 1915  
khand, Balasore, (armed fight with the police.  
Jyotin Mukherjee and Chittapriya Roy Choudhury laid  
down their lives).
15. Shibpur, District September 30, 1915  
Nadia, (looted booty Rs. 20,700—one  
constable and three villagers  
also killed and eleven others  
wounded).
16. Cornwallis Calcutta, November 17, 1915  
Street, (looted booty Rs. 800).
17. Corporation Calcutta, December 2, 1915  
Street, (looted booty Rs. 25,000).
18. Sasherdighi, District December 19, 1915  
Mymensingh, (murder).
19. Kaliachapra, District December 22, 1915  
Mymensingh, (looted booty Rs. 850).
20. Chowlpatti Calcutta, December 27, 1915  
Road, (looted booty Rs. 750).
21. Kartola, District December 29, 1915  
Tippera, (looted booty Rs. 15,000—  
murder also committed).
22. Dafferpur, District March 3, 1916  
Howrah, (looted booty Rs. 2,000).
23. Dhanakati, District June 9, 1916  
Faridpur, (looted booty Rs. 43,000).
24. Bairagitola, Dacca town, June 23, 1916  
(two constables killed).

## TWO GREAT INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES

25. Sambhunath     Calcutta,     June 30, 1916  
     Pandit's     (Dy. Suptd. of Police killed).  
     Road,
26. Salkia,     District     August 4, 1916  
     Howrah,     (armed clash with the police).
27. Kalta Bazar,     Dacca town,     June 15, 1918  
     (armed fight with the police,  
     Tarini Majumdar and Nalini  
     Bagchi laid down their lives  
     after killing a Head Constable  
     and seriously injuring one  
     Sub-Inspector).

But, unfortunately, a good many of the stolen arms and ammunition of Rodda's firm were from time to time recovered by the police. According to an official report of 1917, 960 rounds of the stolen ammunition were recovered from 3 Ramlal's Lane, over 1,000 from 61|1|1 Wellington Street, and about 21,000 from 34, Sheo Thakur's Lane, Barrabazar, where Haridas Datta was arrested. Three Mausers were recovered from Jyotin Mukherjee and his followers at the Chasa-Khand battle-field in Balasore, one from Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya who was arrested at 39, Pathuria-ghata Street (1916), one from Debendra Nath Choudhury who was caught with a fully-loaded Mauser and 30 rounds of ammunition, as well as one from Bhupendra Kumar Datta in May, 1917 in Calcutta. Besides, from the house of Tincowrie Banerjee at Gondalpara, Chandernagore, four Mausers and 241 cartridges were recovered by the police on December 1, 1916. From the house of Dukari Devi at Jhaupara, District Birbhum, "7 Mausers, 1100 old rounds of cartridges and seditious literature, were found". Another Mauser pistol was captured by the police from Jugal Kishore Datta in Salkia, Howrah (August, 1916) and two more in Kalta Bazar held by Tarini Majumdar and Nalini Bagchi (June, 1918). In both these cases armed resistance was offered to the enemies

by means of the Mausers. A few of the Mausers were also thrown into the Ganges under unavoidable circumstances by the revolutionaries themselves.

#### NASIK AS A CENTRE OF CONSPIRACY

It has been already shown that towards the end of the 19th century the influence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak led to the formation of a party of violence in Maharashtra, the first overt act of which was the murder of the Messrs Rand and Ayerst, a Plague Commissioner and a Lieutenant respectively, by Damodar and Balkrishna Chopekars (1897) who were subsequently hanged. The lamp they lit was not, however, extinguished with their death. The cause was taken up by a band of fiery young men at Nasik of whom Vinayak Damodar Savarkar stood first and foremost. Even while a mere school boy, Savarkar had formed around him a small group known as the Mitra Mela (about 1900 A. D.) which a few years later grew into his famous Abhinav Bharat Society with ramifications at Bombay, Poona and Pen, and also at Aurangabad and Hyderabad in the Hyderabad State. The Judgment of the Special Tribunal in the Nasik Conspiracy Case shows that the Abhinav Bharat Society was a secret society which administered oaths to its members. It was founded on the model of the revolutionary societies in Russia. As a result of the search conducted at the house of Ganesh Savarkar, a brother of V. D. Savarkar and also an early member of the Mitra Mela, on March 2, 1909, "a copy of Forost's Secret Societies of the European Revolution, 1776-1876, was found, in which", states the Judgment, "is described the secret organisation of the Russian Nihilists, consisting of small circles or groups affiliated into sections, each member knowing only the members of the circle to which he belonged. This may explain the existence of various small groups of young men who are found in this case to have been

working for the same objects and drawing weapons from the same source without personal acquaintance with the members of other groups".<sup>62</sup>

The murder of Mr. Jackson, the District Magistrate of Nasik, (December 21, 1909) by Anant Lakshman Kanher was the work of the Aurangabad group of Abhinav Bharat Society, done with one of the twenty Browning pistols sent by V. D. Savarkar from London.

The Nasik murder led to the Nasik Conspiracy Case in which thirty-eight persons including Vinayak Savarkar were tried by a Special Tribunal. Savarkar was sentenced to transportation for life in December, 1910, while twenty-six other persons received varying conviction ranging from transportation or imprisonment from fifteen years to six months. The rest was acquitted.

An important ramification of the Nasik conspiracy was the Gwalior conspiracy which was brought to light in connection with the arrest of Ganesh Savarkar at Bombay on February 28, 1909. The Gwalior branch was called the Nava Bharat Society. The rules of the Society, as stated by the Judgment of the Special Tribunal, approved of constitutional agitation and, parallel to it, of agitation that comprised of "target shooting, sword-exercises, preparation of bombs, dynamite, procuring revolvers, taking gymnastic exercises, running races, learning and teaching the use of weapons and missiles, travelling in different provinces and countries and getting information thereof... Should an occasion for a general rising in any province at a proper time arrive, all should help that cause and attain liberty". Of the twenty persons convicted in the Gwalior Conspiracy Case, the ringleaders G. L. Desai and T. G. Sawartwala were sentenced to seven years' transportation.

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62. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*.

Ever since the arrival of V. V. S. Aiyar, a political disciple of Savarkar, in Pondicherry from Paris (by November, 1910), Pondicherry became a foster ground of revolutionary conspiracy with political affiliation to the Paris group of Indian revolutionaries headed by Madame Cama. As the days of the Royal Coronation were approaching, V. V. S. Aiyar who was always in correspondence with Madame Cama, decided to strike a great blow at the bureaucracy by shedding English blood by violent methods. He issued 'seditious' leaflets from Pondicherry, and he inspired the minds of his associates, viz., Nagaswami Aiyar and Balkrishna Aiyar of Pondicherry and also Vanchi Aiyar of Tinnevely in that direction. It was this last-named person who murdered Mr. Ashe, the District Magistrate of Tinnevely, on June 17, 1911 in a railway carriage at Maniyachi junction in the Tinnevely district. Vanchi Aiyar, a clerk in the Travancore Forest Department, committed suicide a few minutes later, while Mr. Ashe died after about half an hour of the firing. The real brain behind this assassination was undoubtedly V. V. S. Aiyar whose letter to V. D. Savarkar, Prisoner, bearing Pondicherry postmark on the same date was significant. Undoubtedly, the letter was intended to convey to him a hint that the murder was the fruition of the policy of his Abhinav Bharat spirit. The jubilations of Madame Cama's *Bande Mataram* over the assassination were also significant. In course of a commentary the paper wrote in July, 1911 thus : "Thank God His voice will not fall on deaf ears, because when the gilded slaves from Hindusthan were parading the streets of London as performers in the Royal Circus, and were prostrating themselves like so many clowns at the feet of the King of England, two young and brave countrymen of ours proved by heir daring deeds at Tinnevely, and at Mymensingh that Hindusthan is not sleeping". The

Mymensingh murder mentioned here refers to the murder of Sub-Inspector Raj Kumar Roy on June 18, 1911. The next issue of the *Bande Mataram* also wrote in the same vein. The Tinnevely murder gave rise to the Tinnevely Conspiracy Case which was conducted by a Special Tribunal of the Madras High Court. The Judgment delivered on February 15, 1912 convicted nine of the accused fourteen while acquitting the rest.<sup>63</sup>

#### INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S.A.

Towards the close of the 19th century a general interest among Americans about India was created by the lecture tour of Swami Vivekananda, whose tradition was successfully carried on by his worthy successor, Swami Abhedananda, through the Vedanta Society founded by the Swamiji at New York.

At the beginning of the 20th century New York became a centre of anti-British intrigues. The activities of the Pan-Aryan Association (1906) formed by S. L. Joshi, a Mathathi Christian, and Mahomed Barkataullah, a Mahomedan of Bhopal, those of Indo-American National Association renamed as the Society for the Advancement of India (1907) founded by Myron H. Phelps, a Broadway lawyer, together with the activities of the Irish malcontents of the Clan-na-Gael and a visit paid by Madame Cama to New York in October, 1907, fostered a favourable background for Indians' anti-British work in the city. George Freeman, a discontented Irishman employed on the staff of the *Gaelic American*, who was in correspondence with Madame Cama and who received monthly financial help from her at one stage, rendered a great service to the cause of Indian revolutionaries "by way of distributing seditious literature and egging on Young Indians

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63. *Ibid.*

in New York and elsewhere to work for the downfall of British rule in India". It has been stated that in 1908 Freeman, S. L. Joshi and Barkataullah used to meet twice a week at Barkataullah's house to discuss the Indian problems and that Freeman personally supervised the publication of Tarak Nath Das's *Free Hindusthan* at the office of the paper. But after the departure of Barkataullah for Japan (February, 1909) and of S. L. Joshi and Myron Phelps for India (March, 1909) the centre of political activity for India gradually shifted from New York to San Francisco and its neighbourhood.

At the end of 1906 a large number of Indians, mostly Sikh labourers, artisans and cultivators from the Punjab, began to migrate into the Western coast of the U. S. A. and Canada in search of employment. But being expelled by a black-white labour conflict at Bellingham and other places of the U. S. A., a large number of them took refuge in Vancouver, British Columbia. During 1907-13 a number of leaflets, periodicals and newspapers were issued by Indian leaders in America to incite discontent among Indian labourers (a large number of them being retired soldiers) in the U. S. A. and Canada. A Hindu named Ram Nath Puri of village Khem Karan in the Lahore district, who was employed as a watchman at a California hospital in 1906-07, worked as an interpreter to the large number of Sikh immigrants into that State. Early in 1907 he started a Hindusthan Association in San Francisco, with branches in Vancouver and Astoria, and issued a lithographed Urdu periodical called the *Circular-i-Azadi* (Circular of Freedom) first from San Francisco and then from Oakland (California) until it ceased to appear in 1908 for lack of funds. This Circular of Freedom stated the objects of the Association in the July and August number of 1907 as being "to impart instruction to Indians on

national lines, to teach gun-firing, Japanese exercises, and the use of the spear, sword, and other weapons in self-defence, and to foster American sympathy with India". It also quoted extracts from the *Gaelic American* and Indian newspapers with the manifest intention of creating disaffection against the British rule in India. About the same time Tarak Nath Das, a great revolutionary, published his own paper *Free Hindusthan* which contained appeals to Indians to rise up in arms against the British rule in India.

But as Tarak Das's paper was written in English which was not intelligible to a large section of Indians in America, so a more direct appeal was made to the Sikh settlers in America through the publication of another paper in Gurmukhi, *Swadesh Sewak* (1909), being a monthly mouthpiece of Swadesh Sewak Home founded at Vancouver by G. D. Kumar who belonged to Bannu in the N. W. Frontier Province of India. The paper dealt with the grievances of the Sikh immigrants in Canada centring round the Immigration Laws and incited them to resort to arms for the redress of their grievances. The paper continued till 1911. Besides the propaganda carried on by such papers as the *Pardeshi Khalsa* (The Sikh Abroad) in 1910, the *Aryan* in 1911 and the *Sansar* (World) in 1912, Tarak Nath Das worked strenuously in 1912-13 by writing articles in his own paper and in Madame Cama's *Bande Mataram* and also by undertaking extensive tour to keep aflame the growing discontent among the Indians in America. From Berkeley, California, Tarak Nath Das wrote to a leading member of the Indian revolutionary party the following letter (June, 1913) which read thus: "I am now working with the Sikh brothers in the actual field. I feel as I always felt and wrote to you that there is always a dearth of true workers who can work among the mass people (sic) the backbone of India. If Sirdar (sic)



Ajit Singh is available and willing to come to United States I can send you a ticket from Europe to United States at any time. I have talked the matter with my Sikh friends, and they have promised to do all they can to carry on the work, but where is the real worker? Please do your best to send Sirdarji if it is at all possible".<sup>64</sup>

#### HARDYAL AND THE *Ghadr* MOVEMENT

The next stage in the movement is the advent of Hardyal in the U. S. A. in January, 1911 giving a new tone to the Indian activities there. Having left India in August, 1908, he spent some time at London, Oxford, Paris and Geneva. He met Krishnavarma and S. R. Rana at Paris and edited Madame Cama's *Bande Mataram* at Geneva. Having served for a few months in the Stanford University at Palo Alto, California, as a Professor of Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit (February-September, 1912), Hardyal resigned his post and undertook extensive tour through California and Oregon fomenting anti-British feeling, particularly among the Sikh (and also Pathan) settlers in those States.

The contents of Hardyal's lectures at different places may be understood from the following summary notes taken from his lecture delivered at Astoria on June 4, 1913: "After the usual remarks about the drain of wealth from India and the consequent prevalence of famine and disease, he said that the Delhi durbar cost five million dollars while the people went hungry. . . Personal liberty was unknown in India,

64. *Ibid.* It is pertinent to mention here that Sirdar Ajit Singh who absconded to Persia in 1909 left that country in 1911 and settled at Lausanne, after a short visit to the Paris group of revolutionaries, as a teacher of Oriental Languages under the Persian alias of Mirza Hassan Khan. He again went to Paris in 1913 and left it for Rio-de-Janeiro in November, 1914. From there he sent Jodh Singh Mahajan to Berlin in 1915.

and the Government there was 'the worst Government on the face of the earth'. Torture in prison was not uncommon, and there was no justice in the courts in cases between a Hindu and an Englishman... The Roman Empire, the French before the Revolution, or even the Russian Empire was not worse than the British Government in India. It could not be reformed and it must be abolished... All were invited to help in teaching this poor people to rise against the tyrant Government. He called it the British Vampire not the British Empire..."

A momentous step taken by Hardyal at this stage was the foundation of a society at San Francisco popularly called the *Ghadr* party and the issue of a weekly as the organ of the society named the *Ghadr* (Mutiny). In spite of some valuable work done by many persons in America preceding Hardyal's arrival, it cannot be doubted that Hardyal was the real founder of the *Ghadr* party and the paper. About 1908 a group of Indian students had clustered round Tarak Nath Das engaged in the propagation of Indian nationalism. In December, 1912 a convention of Indian students was held at Chicago in which an association, called the Hindusthan Association of America, was founded. Its membership comprised such names as Tarak Das, Surendra Mohan Bose, Sudhin Bose, P. S. Khankhoje, Basanta Kumar Roy, Baneswar Das, Surendra Nath Kar, Keshav Das Shastri, R. Ahmed, V. P. Aiyar, P. C. Mukherjee, S. N. Deb Barman, Adhar Chandra Naskar, H. K. Rakshit, A. S. Hardikar, and Laxman Prasad Varma. The association published a monthly organ called *The Hindusthanee Student* from Berkeley, California.<sup>65</sup> Sudhin Bose, at one stage president of the association, described it as "most emphatically an educational, not a political, organisation

65. See the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. N. 102/1915.

whatsoever".<sup>66</sup> Sri Jitendra Nath Lahiri, who took admission as a student of Organic Chemistry in the University at Berkeley in 1913, has informed the present writer that besides Tarak Nath Das who had a small secret group of his own,<sup>67</sup> he himself organized a rifle club with the Indian students at Berkeley in 1913. But in spite of such spade work done by individual men, it was undoubtedly Hardyal, states Sri Lahiri, who founded the *Ghadr* party of which Sri Lahiri himself was a member. The Judgment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case (1915) quoted Nawab Khan's description in enumerating the name and composition of the society. According to it, the society consisted of Sohan Singh (President), Karam Baksh (Vice-President), Hardyal (Secretary), Munshi Ram (Asstt. Secretary) and Kashi Ram (Asstt. Secretary) as well as Kesar Singh, Balwant Singh and Nawab Khan as members. The society of revolutionaries was called the 'Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast' and its publication centre was named the *Jugantar Ashram*. It decided to issue its paper *Ghadr* from San Francisco from November 1, 1913. Evidently, the name *Jugantar Ashram* was influenced by the 'Jugantar' ideal of the Bengal revolutionaries as preached to the Punjabis by Jatindra Nath Banerjee during his tour in the Punjab in 1906. As Mr. Ker writes : "When the news of the

66. *The Modern Review* for September, 1917.

67. To the secret group of Tarak Nath Das belonged such men as Suren Bose, Swarna Mitra, Suren Kar, Adhar Naskar, etc. Surendra Mohon Bose, who was a Chemist, sent from Chicago in 1913 to Harnam Singh (of Sahri) in Vancouver notes and formulæ of his own for making bombs, and knowing that they have not reached his hands he again sent to him a copy of a Russian bomb manual from Paris in January, 1914 through the medium of Surendra Nath Kar. In his letter to Harnam Singh he wrote thus: "In this package I am sending you a very valuable copy of the process used by the Russian revolutionists. It is a very valuable copy, so do not lose it. After you are through with it, or have made a copy, send it registered to Dr. C. Chakravarty, 494, R. 141 St. Street, New York". G. D. Kumar in a letter to Tarak Das (1913) referred to this Harnam Singh as a leader of the revolutionary movement in Vancouver.

attempt to assassinate the Viceroy at Delhi on 23rd December, 1912, reached Berkeley, Hardyal is said to have claimed credit for it as the work of his party; there is little doubt that he was the author of the *Jugantar Circular* shortly afterwards issued from Paris in praise of the bomb-thrower".

The first issue of the *Ghadr*, dated November 1, 1913, described itself as 'the enemy of the English Raj, and announced that it would be issued weekly in Urdu and Gurmukhi. The first page had the following words on the top:

"O brave men! Indian young men! Take up arms soon". The aims and objects of the paper were set forth in the leader entitled 'Our Name and Work'. It wrote: "... a new epoch opens to-day, the 1st of November 1913, in the history of India, because there commences a war today in foreign lands against the English Raj in the country's tongue. This is an auspicious day, in that the word *Ghadr* which is to root out English oppression, appears on (the title-page of) this paper in Urdu and Gurmukhi (character)"

It further states: "What is our name? The *Ghadr*. In what does our work consist? (In bringing about) a rising..... Where will (this) rising break out? In India. When will (it) break out? In a few years. Why should (it) break out? Because the people can no longer bear the oppression and tyranny practised under English rule and are ready to fight and die for freedom. It is the duty of every Indian to make preparations for this rising".

The first issue of the *Ghadr* also contained an article under the caption of "English Rule Exposed: Some Plain Things" which gave a graphic picture of the economic exploitation of India by the British and suggested the remedies in the leader "Our Name and Work". The second issue of the *Ghadr* (November 8, 1913) also reprinted this article and stated in the

leader, 'Our Duty and Your Duty', that the *Ghadr* conveyed to "the nation" once a week the message of rebellion which is "brave, outspoken, unbridled (and) swift-footed". It is "lightning", a "storm" and a "flame of fire". The article further stated : "We are India's voice, which the tyrant has suppressed within the country. We are a resume, of all those lectures which would have been delivered in every city, if our patriots had been out of jail to-day. We are the successor of all those newspapers which have been suppressed, but the memory of which will ever remain in the history of India".<sup>68</sup>

In the conduct of the paper Hardyál was soon joined by Ram Chandra Peshwari of the Peshwar district, who had left India in 1911 and made his way from Japan to Seattle, California, in March, 1913. Soon he made himself prominent in the circle of the *Jugantar Ashram*, and at a dinner given in his honour by Hardyál on January 16, 1914 the latter announced the transfer of editorship of the paper from his hands to those of his honourable guest.

Through the persistent propaganda of the *Ghadr* and the extensive lecture tour of Hardyál and Ram Chandra, the *Ghadr* spirit spread far and wide in America and even in India. After Hardyál's flight to Switzerland while a case against him was still pending (March, 1914), Ram Chandra Peshwari became the chief figure in the *Jugantar Ashram* and was soon joined by Bhagwan Singh and Barkataullah who had arrived from Japan at San Francisco on May 22, 1914.

Meanwhile, the spread of 'sedition' round the question of immigration continued unabated in Canada in which prominent role was played by C. K. Varma, a Hindu of Kathiawar under the guise of Husain Rahim

68. An abstract of the first two issues of the *Ghadr*, published by the *Jugantar Ashram*, San Francisco, U.S.A.—Vide the I.B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, F. N. 586/1914.

and by Raja Singh of the Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab. This ultimately resulted in the *Komagata Maru* expedition led by Gurdit Singh, which, starting from Hongkong on April 4, 1914 with 165 passengers and collecting new passengers on the way and which being addressed and incited by Barkataullah and Bhagwan Singh at Yokohama, arrived at Vancouver port on May 23, 1914. But as the passengers were prevented from landing under the Immigration Law, the ship left Vancouver for India and appeared on the Hooghly near Calcutta in September, 1914. After the initial paraphernalia of official search required by the existing rules, the ship went to Budge Budge on September 29 wherefrom its Sikh passengers, numbering about 250, started to march to Calcutta in a body defying the police orders. In the inevitable clash that followed men on both sides lost their lives. Besides, two Europeans were killed, six more were injured, including Sir Frederick Halliday, Police Commissioner of Calcutta, Mr. R. Humphreys of the Punjab Commission and Mr. D. Petrie of the Punjab Police.<sup>69</sup>

The *Komagata Maru* incident not only sent a thrill of sensation through India, but also gave a great fillip to the *Ghadr* movement in the U. S. A. On Hardy's departure from the American scene the tradition of his lecture tour was kept up by Ram Chandra, Barkataullah, Bhagwan Singh and also by Govind Lal of Delhi. These meetings as reported in the *Ghadr* may be indicated as follows.<sup>70</sup> :

1. Berkeley, Feb. 1,      reported in *Ghadr* of      Feb. 10, 1914  
1914
2. Stockton, Feb. 15,      reported in *Ghadr* of      Feb. 17, 1914  
1914
3. Another meeting on  
Feb. 16, 1914

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69. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917.*

70. The Judgment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, dated September 13, 1915.

4. Sacramento, March 4, reported in *Ghadr* of March 10, 1914  
1914
5. Sacramento, announced in *Ghadr* of March 17, 1914  
March 22, 1914
6. San Francisco, reported in *Ghadr* of March 31, 1914  
March 25, 1914
7. Meetings at Astoria,  
March-April, 1914
8. Alesandro reported in *Ghadr* of April 21, 1914.  
(Los Angels),  
March 26, 1914
9. Stockton, April 13, announced in *Ghadr* of March 31, 1914  
1914
10. Fresno, Upland, reported in *Ghadr* of May 19, 1914  
Oxnard, Los Angels  
May 10, 1914
11. Astoria, June 7, 1914 reported in *Ghadr* of June 16, 1914
12. Wina, June 9, 1914 reported in *Ghadr* of June 16, 1914
13. Washington reported in *Ghadr* of July 14, 1914  
(Oregon), June 11,  
1914  
Aberdeen, June 13,  
1914  
Seattle, June 15, 1914
14. Portland, June 14, reported in *Ghadr* of June 13, 1914  
1914
15. Stockton, July 3, reported in *Ghadr* of July 14, 1914  
1914
16. Elton (California), reported in *Ghadr* of July 14, 1914  
July 5, 1914  
Jersey (California),  
July 7, 1914  
July 14, 1914
17. Oxnard, July 26, 1914 reported in *Ghadr* of August 4, 1914
18. Fresno, August 9, announced in *Ghadr* of August 4, 1914  
1914  
Sacramento,  
August 11, 1914  
August 4, 1914
19. Stockton, August,  
1914
20. Portland, August 7,  
1914

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|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 21. Fresno, Sept. <sup>e</sup> 22,<br>1914 | as reported in the<br><i>Fresno Republican</i> of | Sept. 23, 1914                 |
| 22. Special articles on<br>war             | published in <i>Ghadr</i> of                      | July 28 and<br>August 4, 1914. |

The chief orators in these meetings were obviously Ram Chandra, Bhagwan Singh and Barkataullah who, true to the tradition of Hardy, spread the *Ghadr* spirit among their audience, and as soon as the war broke out, they made arrangements to send large batches of Sikhs to India in order to foment a general rising. While an advance party including Kartar Singh arrived at Colombo by the middle of September, 1914 to prepare in the Punjab a suitable ground for an eventual rising, big arrivals of *Ghadr* men took place by s. s. *Toshi Maru* and s. s. *Mashima Maru* reaching Calcutta and Colombo respectively on October 29 and October 25, 1914. Fresh batches followed suit by subsequent ships, of which mention may be made of s. s. *Salamis* which carried, among others, Sohan Singh, Pingley and Balwant Singh.

This was the Punjab background in which Rash Behari Bose proceeded to engineer a revolution with its base at Lahore in February, 1915.

"By the end of 1915", writes Mr. Ker, "all the more enterprising Sikhs had left America for India, and practically all the real leaders had sought fresh woods and pastures new either in the pay of Germany or in promoting the various schemes of the *Ghadr* party for creating a rising in India from places in the Far East through Siam and Burma. Those who were engaged in latter movement kept in more or less casual touch with Ram Chandra, but when he was left to himself in San Francisco his influence declined, and in 1916 the quarrels and disagreements usual in all conspiracies which have not an efficient head began to break out." One of the chief centres of opposition to



Ram Chandra was the Khalsa Diwan (Sikh Assembly) the first grievance of which against him was that he was diverting the funds of the party to San Francisco which would have otherwise been devoted to the local temple and, secondly, that they were called upon to contribute largely to a movement in the control of which they had hardly any share.

Within the *Ghadr* party Bhagwan Singh also led a faction against Ram Chandra. By obtaining the possession of the old *Ghadr* premises at 1324, Valencia Street Bhagwan Singh began to issue the paper since February 20, 1917, while Ram Chandra by setting up a new press at 1017, Valencia Street, published the first number of his new *Ghadr* on February 7, 1917. Besides, charges were brought against Ram Chandra for misappropriation of *Ghadr* funds which were not altogether without basis, as he himself admitted in a meeting at San Francisco on January 6, 1917 that "the money received from Germany had not been applied to the objects for which it was given, and that false accounts and reports had been sent to Germany; he excused himself on the interesting and remarkable ground that the Indian advisers of the Germans in Berlin were Bengalis". All these developments had been alienating the sympathy of Americans from the movement and reports against it began to appear increasingly in the press. The last and final blow to the *Ghadr* movement was struck by the fact of America's entry into the First World War in 1917 on the side of the Anglo-French Powers, and this in its turn was followed by the arrest of good many *Ghadr* men in the U. S. A. leading to the historic San Francisco Trial during 1917-1918.

#### INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY WORK IN EUROPE

While things were shaping themselves thus in America, European capitals were also utilised by

Indian revolutionaries for organizing anti-British conspiracies. They had their bases, first at London and Paris, and later at Berlin. Shyamji Krishna Varma, S. R. Rana, Mrs. V. R. Cama and V. D. Savarkar formed the earliest band of Indian revolutionaries working in Europe. Krishna Varma, a man of Kathiawar, founded the "India Home Rule Society", with himself as President, at London as early as January, 1905 and brought out as the monthly organ of the Society the *Indian Sociologist* through which he gave voice to the grievances and problems of India. Another important service rendered by Krishna Varma was his Fellowship project (1905-06) which, supplemented by three Fellowships offered by S. R. Rana from Paris, attracted a number of Indian students to London in the first decade of the twentieth century. His 'India House' (July 1, 1905), ostensibly a hostel of Indian students, soon turned into a centre of Indian revolutionaries, where Sunday meetings were regularly held and topics of revolutionary significance discussed. The arrival of V. D. Savarkar with an award of Rana's Shivaji Fellowship, at London in July, 1906 and the withdrawal of Krishna Varma from England to Paris (1907) following the threat of British official action against him, gave a new tone to the India House politics. Savarkar, who was placed in charge of the India House by Krishna Varma, soon started there a branch of his Abhinav Bharat Society and formed before long a party of violence advocating open rebellion against the alien rulers. The arrival in London of a group of Extremist leaders from India at this stage, viz., G. S. Khaparde of Amraoti, Lala Lajpat Rai, Hardyal and Ram Bhuj Datta from the Punjab, and B. C. Pal from Calcutta (September, 1908), warmed up the activities of the India House.

In course of a discussion at the India House on November 8, 1908 on the subject of "Are We Really

Disarmed?" Savarkar pointed out that "in spite of the Arms Act there was plenty of warlike material in India. He instanced the Native States and Native troops which, he said, would be sufficient to overpower and drive the British out of India. What was wanted was active work in the Native States and among the native troops, and it would be the duty of every Indian leaving these shores for India to work in that direction. The advent of the bomb had terrified the British public, 'we must teach our people to hate the foreign oppressor and success is sure'." This was followed by the publication of Savarkar's historic book entitled *The Indian War Of Independence Of 1857* by 'An Indian Nationalist' (1909), many copies of which were sent to India under disguise. The Mutiny celebrations in the India House, first organised on May 9, 1905, became an annual affair since then, and on one such occasion on May 10, 1909 Savarkar delivered a passionate lecture exhorting Indians to take up arms against the British tyrants following the example of the heroes of 1857. As the character of the India House politics assumed a more and more radical turn, the attendance at its regular meetings began to decline, although a select few clustered round Savarkar and also started revolver shooting practice at a range in Tottenham Court Road. One of them was Madan Lal Dhingra who suffered execution at the hands of the British Government on a charge of murdering William Curzon Wyllie, Political Aide-de-Camp at the India Office, at the Imperial Institute on July 1, 1909. A lengthy statement by Dhingra found in his pocket and which was afterwards printed in large numbers and widely circulated has been proved by its style to have been the work of Savarkar. It was worded thus: "I attempted to shed English blood intentionally and of purpose, as an humble protest against the inhuman transportations and hangings of, Indian youth.

"In this attempt I consulted none but my own conscience; conspired with none but my own duty.

"I believe that a nation unwillingly held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible I attacked by surprise—since cannon could not be had I drew forth and fired a revolver.

"... The only lesson required in India is to learn how to die and the only way to teach it is by dying alone....

"It is my favourite prayer, may I be reborn of the same mother and may I redie in the same sacred cause, till my mission is done and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God."

Although the authorship of the above statement could not be proved in court, yet it was the confirmed opinion of the authorities that the plot was planned and directed by Savarkar himself.

Another important service rendered by Savarkar to the cause of Indian revolution was the despatch of twenty Browning pistols with ammunition to India through a Bombay man, Chatturbhuj Amin, and they had been purchased at Paris through the instrumentality of S. R. Rana. Chatturbhuj Amin, a cook at the India House, took them concealed at the false bottom of his box and delivered them to G. K. Patankar, a member of the Nasik group of revolutionaries (March, 1909). It may be noted in this connection that one of these pistols was used in the murder of Mr. Jackson, the District Magistrate of Nasik, at a farewell party at the Vijayanand Theatre by a Maratha Brahmin named Anant Lakshman Kanher on December 21, 1909. Both Kanher and his two accomplices, Karve and Deshpande, faced death by hanging, thus setting up inspiring examples to the prospective martyrs of India.

After the arrest of Savarkar (March 13, 1910) under the Fugitive Offenders Act followed by the frus-

tration of his attempted escape, V. V. S. Aiyar and Virendra Chattopadhyay, both being political disciples of Savarkar, became the most important figures in England. But as the political atmosphere of England appeared more and more incongenial to them, they too retired from England to Paris respectively in April and June, 1910. With their retirement the movement in England virtually came to an end, and Paris turned into the chief centre of Indian revolutionary activities in Europe.

Two prominent Indians living at Paris at that time were S. R. Rana, a Rajput of Kathiawar, and Mrs. V. R. Cama, a Parsi of Bombay. The greatest service rendered by Ranaji to the cause of Indian revolution was in the form of providing funds and arms to it as well as an asylum to the revolutionaries at Paris. Hem Chandra Das of Midnapore, who had been to Paris in 1906 for learning bomb-making, was greatly helped by Ranaji in numerous ways. Ranaji not merely provided shelter to him (along with P. M. Bapat) at his own residence, but also supplied him with cyclostyled copies of Russian and Polish formulae of bomb manufacture translated into English. An enthusiastic admirer and supporter of Madame Cama, Ranaji organized in collaboration with the former a protest meeting at Paris (May 11, 1907) against the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai out of British India. Madame Cama delivered a fiery speech at that meeting.

The 'seditious' speeches of Madame Cama at the India House, London, in 1908 and her persistent endeavour in the printing and circulation of revolutionary literature made herself notorious in the eyes of the British bureaucracy. Her monthly paper *Bande Mataram* was directed to revolutionary propagandism till 1914. Besides, she was a great adviser and financial supporter of many Indian revolutionaries with whom she held frequent correspondence. That

Madame Cama was a spiritual inspirer, if not direct instigator, of Mr. Ashe's murder (June, 1911) is evidenced by her violent writing in the April, 1911 issue of *Bande Mataram* wherein she, after making a reference to the Nasik murder of Mr. Jackson (1909), the murder of Head Constable Srish Chakravarty at Calcutta (1911) and the attempted bomb outrage at Dalhousie Square (1911), wrote the following:

"Dealing with villains like these, an Indian must throw to the winds all the ordinary rules of warfare. . . In a meeting or in a bungalow, on the railway or in a carriage, in a shop or in a church, in a garden or at a fair, wherever an opportunity comes, Englishmen ought to be killed . . . The great Nana Sahib understood this, and our friends the Bengalis have also begun to understand".<sup>71</sup>

Another signal service rendered by Madame Cama to the nationalist cause of India was that she raised a national flag of India, made by herself, at the International Socialist Conference at Stuttgart in Germany (August 18, 1907) and there delivered an impassioned speech advocating the cause of India's freedom. She also moved a resolution to that effect which was not, however, passed. At the outbreak of the World War I both Ranaji and Madame Cama were interned. As for Krishna Varma, it is necessary to note that he did not take any major part in revolutionary activities at Paris until his retirement to Geneva shortly afterwards. His *Indian Sociologist*, however, continued to be published from London under Savarkar's guidance till 1909, when it was transferred to Paris and finally to Geneva.

V. V. S. Aiyar of Trichinopoly who was the right-hand man of Savarkar in England, left Paris for Pondicherry (October, 1910) in the guise of a

71. *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917.*

Mahomedan, while V. Chattopadhyay went to Germany in 1914 for prosecuting higher studies.

#### FORMATION OF THE BERLIN-INDIA COMMITTEE

With the outbreak of the World War I the focal point of India's revolutionary movement was no longer Paris but Berlin. It centred round the activities of Berlin-India Committee (formed in September, 1914) by Indians in Germany with the official co-operation of the German Government. Although it was a part of the German policy at that time to actively help Indian revolutionaries organize an armed rising against the British Indian Government, no practical step had yet been taken till the outbreak of the War (August 4, 1914). The efforts of two Bengali revolutionaries, Virendra Chattopadhyay and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya (living at Halle, but starting work in Berlin from September 3, 1914), soon re-inforced by Chanji Kersasp, Dharendra Kumar Sarkar and N. S. Marathe (all living in Berlin at that time) seeking the assistance of the German Government to the cause of Indian revolution during the war period, elicited great enthusiasm from the German Foreign Office and culminated in the formation of the Berlin-India Committee in September, 1914. The members on the Committee were V. Chattopadhyay, Abinash Bhattacharya, Dr. Gyanendra Chandra Das Gupta, Champak Raman Pillai,<sup>72</sup> Dr. Bishnu Suktankar (Vice-President), Dr. Joshi, Gopal Paranjpe, Karandikar, Mansur Rahman, Prof. Srish Chandra Sen, Satis Chandra Roy,

72. Champak Raman Pillai, a Tamil Boy, came from India to Switzerland in 1908 with Sir Walter Strickland, a Yorkshire baronet, who became very much anti-British in feeling and was in correspondence with Krishna Varma as well as a contributor to his *Indian Sociologist*. In June, 1912 a body called "International Pro-India Committee" was formed at Zurich with Pillai as President, Dr. Briesse Vice-President, and Strickland, Krishna Varma and Karl Bleibtreu assessors. Its major function was to contribute anti-British articles to the Swiss and German press. The Committee then issued a nationalist magazine called *Pro-India*. .

Sambhasiv Rao, Dharendra Kumar Sarkar (Secretary), Chanji Kersasp, N. S. Marathe and Herr Albercht Ballin (President), and Baron Oppenheim (Vice-President). The last-named person represented the German Foreign Office on the Committee and was precisely the man whose interest and assistance led to its birth. It need be noted here that C. R. Pillai had also started a parallel move in Zurich in September, 1914. Pillai as President of the International Pro-India Committee approached the German Consul at Zurich and gave him an outline of the Indian revolutionary movement. The German Consul promised to communicate his proposal to the German Government. Pillai soon came to Berlin and became a member of the Berlin-India Committee. Through the organization of the Committee the German Foreign Office stood committed to the despatch of arms and ammunition and, if necessary, trained personnel too to the Indian shores as well as financial help to the Indian revolutionaries in and outside India. A circular was also prepared in different Indian languages. The members who had knowledge of Chemistry began to learn the art of preparing powerful explosives at Spandau, while others contacted the captured prisoners of war brought to Germany from the Middle East.<sup>73</sup>

After the initial spade work was over, it was decided to send messengers both to America and India to contact Indian revolutionaries there. Dhiren Sarkar and N. S. Marathe went to America with code instruction written on the inside of the cloth linings of their coats to the German embassy at Washington. Satis Chandra Roy, Sambhasiv Rao, Dr. Joshi, Srish Chandra Sen, Abinash Chandra Battacharya and three others left for India.<sup>74</sup> At this stage Dr. Mueller and V.

73. *Europe Bharatiya Biplaver Sadhana* by Dr. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya (Calcutta, 1958, Chapter VII).

74. *Ibid* Also see *Aprakasita Rajneetik Itihas* by Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta (Calcutta, 1953), pp. 3-10. .



Chattopadhyay became its Secretary and a Vice-President respectively. Meanwhile, Jitendra Nath Lahiri, Bhupendra Nath Datta, Tarak Nath Das, Lala Hardyal, Md. Barkataullah, Heramba Lal Gupta, Dr. Abdul Hafiz, Dr. M. G. Probhakar, Jodh Singh Mahajan, Trimul Acharia, C. K. Chakravarty and many other became members of the Committee at different stages. Jitendra Nath Lahiri has informed the present writer that under instruction from Dhiren Sarkar and N. S. Marathe, he started from Berkeley for Berlin with passport and money from the German Consul at New York. In December, 1914 he reached Berlin and found the Committee to be an independent organization known as the Indian Independence Committee owning collective responsibility. The liaison between the Indians and the German Foreign Office headed by Zimmermann and assisted by Wesendonk was Baron Oppenheim. V. Chattopadhyay was the Secretary to the Committee during 1915-16 and Bhupendra Nath Datta during 1916-1918.

#### ITS WORK IN AMERICA

In America, the Committee's work was mainly directed to the chartering of a steamship, *Maverick*, for carrying arms to India which however proved to be a failure in the long run. Heramba Lal Gupta and later C. K. Chakravarty (since January, 1916) was in charge of the American affairs. The *Ghadr* party worked in close co-operation with the schemes sponsored by the I. I. C., approved and financed by the Germans.

#### THE BAGDAD MISSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In the Middle East, the activities of the Indian Independence Committee (I. I. C.) were directed in four different directions, viz., Bagdad, Suez Canal, Persia and Afghanistan.

According to Bhupendra Nath Datta, early in 1915 the I. I. C. sent a Mission led by Barkataullah, Tarak Nath Das and Kersasp to Istamboul to devise ways and means to work in Western Asia. The delegation waited upon Enver Pasha who received it very cordially and appointed Ali Bey of Tashkilat-i-Makshusa (Eastern wing of the War Office) to provide all facilities to it. By keeping one or two at Istamboul the Mission divided itself into two, one proceeding towards Syria and another towards Bagdad in Mesopotamia. In Mesopotamia these men tried to come into touch with the Indian soldiers, secretly spreading anti-British leaflets, booklets etc. among them. The Bagdad Mission headed by Dr. Mansur was able to collect about 100 sepoys who had fled from their camps and to organize them into a national volunteer corps.<sup>75</sup> In a letter dated July 4, 1916 the members of the I. I. C. from Constantinople informed the head office at Berlin that through the mediation of Enver Pasha the War Office of Turkey had consented to the organization of a Volunteer Legion by Indians. The Turkish authorities, the letter continued, at first wanted it to be incorporated in the Turkish army without its separate identity and for its use for Turkish purposes. But later they consented to the Indian scheme to collect as many able-bodied Indians as possible to form Volunteer Legion, which would make its way through Southern Mesopotamia to the Indian frontier, fighting the English forces in Persia, if necessary. "Our whole object is not a military action which is obviously impossible by mere Volunteers but a political action calculated to exercise a moral influence on the Indian people".<sup>76</sup> Another letter from

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75. *Ibid*, pp. 41-57.

76. Material of the German Foreign Ministry Archives during 1867-1920, as microfilmed by American Committee for the study of War Documents, (A. C. P.), and preserved in the National Archives of India, Reel No. 398.

Constantinople, dated July 22, 1916 and addressed to General Von Lossow, Imperial German Embassy, Constantinople, gives us further details about it. The letter reads in part as follows:

“One of the chief objects we had in view in sending the mission consisting of Dr. Mansur & others to Bagdad was to carry on a vigorous anti-English propaganda in Mesopotamia and see to what extent it would be possible to obtain volunteers for our proposed Legion. We have now received information from three sources regarding the progress made in this direction:—

1. From Ali Bey Bash Hampa of the Tashkilat-i-Makhsusa (Special Department of the War Office).
2. From the telegrams sent by Dr. Mansur to us through the German Embassy, as well as the information sent by the German Consul at Bagdad to the Ambassador.
3. From the telegrams sent directly to us by Dr. Mansur through the Tashkilat.

“Ali Bey Bash Hampa reports that he accompanied H. E. Enver Pasha to Bagdad and presented to Dr. Mansur and party to His Excellency as well as to the Commandant at Bagdad, H. E. Khalil Pasha. H. E. Enver Pasha told H. E. Khalil Pasha to let the Indians have the freedom to organise a Legion if they could. Khalil Pasha thereupon agreed to give us the necessary freedom of action, but expressly stated that he would have no Volunteers in the Ottoman Army as they were merely a hindrance. We would have no objection of their being used outside Turkey—either in Persia or against India. He has given Dr. Mansur and his party (according to the latter's telegram) the necessary *wasika* for the formation of Legion from

among the Indian residents in Turkey including the Indian prisoners”<sup>77</sup>.

The Volunteer Legion was called the Indian National Legion which marched under Indian National Flag.

Besides, as soon as the news of the fall of Kut-el-Amara (April 29, 1916) reached Berlin, Bhupen Datta and Viren Chattopadhyay started for Istamboul whence they, together with Biren Das Gupta, went to the military camps at Eski Shehr and Konia and met the fallen Indian soldiers and officers with the avowed object of getting recruits from them for the Indian National Legion. From a copy of a letter from Constantinople forwarded by the I. I. C. to Baron Von Wesendonk at Berlin, dated July 8, 1916, we come to know the following : “Messrs Datta, Das Gupta and Chatto are leaving in a day or two for Konia, where there are over 200 officers interned. We were given to understand today that the prisoners will be divided into two sections—Muslim and Hindu, and that the Muslims will be kept at Adena, and the Hindus at Haleb (Aleppo). The Government has given us freedom to make propaganda among the troops but makes it a condition that only Muslim workers shall be used for the Muslim troops. They accept our point of view that Hindus shall work among the Hindu troops. The latter are to be used to work on the Bagdad Railway”.<sup>78</sup>

But the work of the Bagdad Mission did not proceed far. Several factors such as bad leadership and misappropriation of power by Dr. Mansur, the policy of the Turkish officers, made up mainly of Arabs and Egyptians, to use the Indian soldiers in their own interests, the policy of the Germans to form small bands out of Indians and to send them to Persia to

77. *Ibid.* Reel No. 398.

78. *Ibid.* Also see *Aprakasha Rajneetik Itihas*, pp. 49-50.

fight against England on behalf of Germany, and, above all, the pan-Islamic anti-Hindu propaganda of a few Indian Mahomedans like Abdul Jabbar of Delhi as well as the religious fanaticism and superstitious belief of the Mahomedan masses led to the ultimate failure of the Bagdad Mission.

#### THE SUEZ CANAL MISSION

The party that proceeded to Damascus through Syria arrived at El-Arish by the middle of July, 1915. It consisted of Trimul Acharia (*alias* Mahomed Akbar), Tarak Nath Das, Biren Das Gupta (*alias* Ali Haidar), Varma (a Hindu from Lucknow under the *alias* of Hussain Ali), Rajab Ali, Ismail Hussain (an Egyptian) etc. It was joined by Abdur Rahaman, an Indian Mahomedan who was in charge of the inn meant for the Muslim pilgrims at Jerusalem. The party contacted the German Commander Kress Von Kressenstein at Bir-el-Sabba, the headquarters of the Senai Desert, and discussed on the following points:

1. Organization of the Beduins under some Turkish officers.
2. Introduction of Indian revolutionaries to Beduin Sheikhs who could be of some help to them to carry their messages to Egypt. Also possibilities to use Beduin women for the purpose to be explored.
3. Opportunity to Indians to go with Turkish patrols to come in contact with the Indian troops.

The Commander received the party very cordially and disclosed to them how he had organised the Beduins of the south and how he proposed to do with the others. He also sent for the Beduin Sheikhs for their introduction to the Indian party and promised to give help to it to go in a patrol.

Soon a patrol party got ready for the Suez Canal.

It was composed of twenty foot-soldiers under a lieutenant, ten Hazines (riding camels), as well as ten Beduins and a few Sheikhs (Beduin chiefs). There were altogether 40 camels, for provisions and water included. A Syrian army also accompanied the party for its defence.

After marching for five nights, through rocky and sandy routes, the party arrived at last within three hours of the Canal. As it did not come across any English patrol on this side of the Canal and as it could not afford to wait indefinitely lest it should run short of provisions or be overpowered by the enemies with a large force, it soon changed its original plans and decided to blow off the railways on the other side of the Canal. Two Beduins were instructed how to blow off a railway line and were provided with a dynamite by the party. Four Beduins were to accompany them to keep watch. "Two packets of picric blocks of one kilo each were made ready for them; the explosives and the prepared fuses were put in separate water-tight bags. They took a rifle and one of our revolvers also with them. We had sent them between Kantara and a point northwards called '34'. A party of twenty of us went very near the water opposite the point of explosion to see that the blowing was properly done and to help our men to escape. The soldiers were left behind as reserve".<sup>79</sup>

After having done the explosion work, and after having fired at a boat carrying Englishmen, the Beduins swam across the Canal and were duly rewarded by the patrol party.

On return to El' Arish the Indian Mission not merely contacted the German and Turkish Commanders,

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79. G. F. M. A., Reel No. 398 for the Report of the Suez Canal Mission as forwarded to Baron Von Wesendonk at Berlin by the I. I. C. (Berlin) on October 12, 1915. Also the writer's interview with Sri Buren Das Gupta at Calcutta. Sri Das Gupta held a very important position on the Suez Canal Mission.

but also sent Beduins as messengers to the Arab chiefs in Egypt seeking their co-operation in war with England, and the response was favourable.

#### THE PERSIAN MISSION

On the Persian Mission two persons figured very prominently, and they were Pandurang Sadashiv Khankhoje and Pramatha Nath Datta (*alias* Dawood Ali Khan). Khankhoje of Nagpur, accompanied by Agashe (*alias* Mohammed Ali), a Maratha young man both being members of the *Ghadr* party, came to Persia *via* Turkey in 1915. At Constantinople Khankhoje met Pramatha Datta, both of whom waited upon Enver Pasha and Talat Pasha and sought their permission to bring the *Ghadr* military men to attack India. The consent having been obtained Khankhoje wrote an Address to the sepoys of the *Ghadr* party which was despatched to California through the German and Turkish embassies. This part of his work did not further proceed. The party then arrived at Bagdad wherefrom it went to Bushire in Persia with a small expedition and carried ample literature for distribution. By this time men who had already been in Persia and who had come along with the Bagdad Mission joined this party. These men included Khandhoo Bhai Kumarji Naik (Gujrati), Kedar Nath, Amin Sarma, Basant Singh and Chait Singh (Punjabis), Mirza Abbas (Hyderabadi), Rishikesh Latta (Garwali), Kersasp (Parsi) etc.

These men, specially Kedar Nath, Basant Singh, Chait Singh etc., distributed a large number of leaflets in the trenches of Indian soldiers in Mesopotamia and Persia. Several thousand copies of five different leaflets, which were discovered among the effects of Herr Wassmuss, German Consul of Bushire (1915), were "identical with some found recently near the lines and guard-posts of the 102nd K. E. O. Grenadiers

at Bushire". • These leaflets included one in English, two in Urdu, one in Hindi and one in Marathi. The English leaflet, headed *Awake And Arise, O Princes And Peoples Of India!* and signed 'Bande Mataram', concluded with an impassioned appeal to the soldiers of India to kill English officers and men indiscriminately if they desired to establish themselves "among the free nations of the world." The Urdu leaflets included one which, signed by ten Ulama of the Society of Ulama and being a direct incitement to *Jehad*, had already been found in large numbers in the possession of returning pilgrims from the *haj* in November-December, 1914. The other Urdu leaflet, lithographed on one side only of a long narrow white sheet, was an appeal to the Sikhs of the Indian Army to drive the British out of India. It began with the Sikh war-cry and greeting 'Sat Siri Akal. Siri wah guruji da Khalsa, Siri wah guruji di fateh' and ended with 'Bande Mataram'. The Hindi leaflet made separate appeals to Hindu, Mahomedan, Rajput and Sikh soldiers and also to the Marathas with the stock revolutionary arguments suitable for each class. The leaflet was headed *Victory To Mother India*, and ended with the words "Shout victory to Mother India and murder the Englishmen. Bande Mataram". The fifth leaflet, lithographed in Balbodh writing and Maratha language, was a direct appeal to the Maratha sepoys for similar action.<sup>80</sup>

It is to be noted here that Persia at the outbreak of the First World War enjoyed only nominal independence, the northern portion being under Russian influence and the southern portion including the oil regions being overrun by the British troops. The Indian party that went to Bushire under the leadership of Khankhoje was driven by the enemies to Shiraz, where it was joined

80. The Note forwarded by the Central Intelligence Office, Simla, to the I. B. Office of different provinces of India, dated April 29, 1915.



by Sufi Amba Prasad.<sup>61</sup> The party then proceeded to Kerman where it set up its base, organizing a force jointly with Indians and Persians. It is pertinent to mention here that Syed Taki Zade, leader of the Persian Democratic Party, had also formed an Iranian-German Committee at Berlin and worked in collaboration with the Berlin-India Committee for the independence of Persia. Taki Zade also sent batches of Persians from Berlin to his own country with the same object. These emissaries together with such men as belonged to the Persian Democratic Party and/or were sympathetic to the cause of India were enlisted in this expedition.

Pramatha Nath Datta who was sent to the border of Beluchistan and Afghanistan by Khankhoje, returned with bullet wounds in his leg and remained at Kerman along with Agashe while the rest under Khankhoje proceeded to Bam in Persian Beluchistan where they raised troops from among the Beluchs. A Beluch chief Jihan Khan also joined them. The Indian expedition and the Beluch troops combined to attack the Frontier Province and set up a provisional government there under Jihan Khan. At this stage they received the *jehad fatarwahs* of Turkey and waited upon the Amir of Persian-Beluchistan who at first agreed to help them but he was soon bribed over by the British to their side. The Amir fought against the Indian troops who were dispersed and to a great extent destroyed too. Persia was a very difficult place at that time where fighting continued on all sides. Khankhoje with a small force returned to Bam and then to Baft in Western Persia fighting all the way, but was wounded and captured. But he fled from the clutches of the enemies and came to Nehriz with the help of a local man. Meanwhile Pramath Nath

61. Sufi Amba Prasad who had absconded to Persia in 1909, lived there till 1915 when he joined the Persian Mission pitted against England. He was arrested twice, but in the first instance he managed to escape.

Datta and Agashe also came fighting to Baft and thence to Nehriz where they, along with some of their German companions, had fallen captives at the hands of the enemies. Khankhoje, after arriving at Nehriz, managed to free them and then the three Indians waded through utmost difficulties to Shiraz (1916). As Khankhoje has stated, he then joined the Persians and fought in their camp against the British till 1919. In 1919 Khankhoje was handed over to the British by the Persians, but again he escaped.<sup>82</sup>

About the fate of the other members of the Mission we may observe that "Abdul Aziz (Basant Singh), Jan Mohammed (Chait Singh), Hassan Ali Khan (Kersasp) after crossing mountains and surmounting many other difficulties, managed to reach Kandahar. Afterwards they returned to Hiraṭ, after that we received no news. Khankhoje who was wounded on the frontier of Beluchisthan, returned to Kerman. . . Mr. Hassan Ali Khan by virtue of his extraordinary services, has won testimonial". Kedar Nath (*alias* Kedar Ali) and Sufi Amba Prasad (*alias* Mohammed Hussain Sufi) were captured at Shiraz. Kedar Nath was hanged, and Sufi Amba Prasad committed suicide in January, 1917, the day before he was to have been shot. Basant Singh and Kersasp were arrested on the Persian border and were executed. Rabi Chand (*alias* Mubarak Ali Khan) and Rishikesh Latta (*alias* Zia Uddin) were rewarded with three certificates each in recognition of his services. The Mission also devoted itself to the circulation of leaflets and pamphlets in diverse languages among the soldiers and pilgrims as well as in mosques. Mullahs and Muja-

82. The statement of Dr. Khankhoje as incorporated in the *Appendices* to B. N. Datta's *Aprakasha Rajneetik Itihas*. The present version has been seen and corrected by Dr. Khankhoje himself who is of opinion that it has been "concise and comprehensive" (Vide the letter of Sri Anandrao Joshi to the writer, dated September 4, 1966).

hids were also sent to various tribes in Persia to persuade them to stir up disturbances against England.<sup>83</sup>

#### THE KABUL MISSION

Next, we may turn our attention to the Kabul Mission which was sent under the leadership of Raja Mahendra Pratap in 1915. In 1914 he left India for Europe and settled in Switzerland where he met V. Chattopadhyay and Hardyal. Accompanied by the former he went to Berlin, and having an autograph letter from the German Emperor to the Amir of Afghanistan he left Berlin (April 10, 1915) for Constantinople where he was favoured with an interview by the Sultan who gave him an autograph letter to the Amir on his behalf. Raja Mahendra Pratap was accompanied in his Mission by Md. Barkataullah as well as Dr. Von Hentig, the German representative, and Captain Casim Bey, the representative of Turkey. The Mission was received cordially by the Amir who sent on his turn two letters to the Sultan of Turkey and the Emperor of Germany respectively.

Mahendra Pratap, on his return to Berlin on March 23, 1918 through many hazards and difficulties, presented a lengthy report of ten landscape-typed pages describing his trip from Berlin to Berlin for the gracious perusal of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of the German Empire. The following is an extract from his lengthy report which will give us an inside view of the Kabul Mission :

"On the second of October 1915 Kabul was reached. Towards the end of October I had the good fortune of presenting the two Imperial letters from H. I. M. The Kaiser and H. I. M. The Sultan to H. M. The Amir. Soon afterwards I and Moulvie Barkataullah were received by H. M. The

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83. G. F. M. A., Reel No. 399. See the Report of the Indian Nationalist Society in Persia to the I. I. C., Berlin, dated November, 14, 1916.

Amir and Princes at an informal conversation. Later followed a number of conferences and conversations between us and the Afghan Government. By the grace of God I had the good fortune to enjoy the confidence of all the parties in Kabul. But I regret very much that I could not accomplish the great work in view—the revolution in India as I had not a single farthing to start my Indian work, I mean that not a single farthing was placed at my disposal either by the Indian public or our friends, Germany or Turkey—to carry on my holy duties. True, besides that there were also a few official handicaps from the Afghan side but these were only due to the backward state of Afghan civilisation, and they could have been easily mended by a flow of the shining metal. H. M. The Amir wished that all of us should stay on in Kabul so that whenever an opportunity presents itself the Afghan Government may openly side with Germany and Turkey. In the meantime military preparations were pushed forward and my Indian work was carried on secretly under certain restrictions by the Afghan Government”.

Referring to the joining of Moulvie Obedullah<sup>84</sup> from India with the party, the Raja further states in his Report: “I together with Moulvie Barkataullah and Moulvie Obedullah had formed a provisional government of India. I was acting as the President of this Government and Moulvie Barkataullah (Diwan Sahib) was working as the Prime Minister and Moulvie Obe-

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84. Moulvie Obedullah was a Sikh, later converted to Islam, and had been a teacher at the Deoband Moslem College in the U. P. under the name of Obedullah. An important member of the “Silk Letter” conspiracy, Obedullah, and also a number of Muslim youths had fled away in 1915 from India to Kabul and other Islamic countries to foment anti-British and pro-Islamic feelings. Two sons of an old Mahomedan soldier of the Punjab, who had accompanied the party, employed their family retainer as liaison between Kabul and the Punjab. That retainer carried a number of letters from the conspirators, written in neat Persian on Silk and sewn up in the lining of his coat, to India and left them in one of the Punjab States. The conspiracy was discovered by Mr. Cleveland and was termed the “Silk Letter” conspiracy.

dullah was our administrative minister.\* We did not care to put down much in black and white but we were every day labouring for our cause as best as we could. I have even with me the minutes and the seal of the Provisional Government of Hind. But as our German friends had left Kabul in May 1915 and my estates were confiscated and my friends in India were extremely watched and as they were also sending messages that to start the big revolution they wanted a few thousand German and Turkish troops and since this was also the idea of the Afghan Government that the Afghan Government could not openly join our side in the ordinary circumstances without the help of money, arms, ammunition and troops, I, Captain Casim Bey and Moulvie Barkataullah Sahib took leave of the Afghan Government."

H. M. the Amir was good enough to hand over to Raja Mahendra Pratap his replies to the two letters of the Emperors, and with these in his possession Mahendra Pratap left Kabul on September 17, 1916.<sup>85</sup>

The report submitted by Raja Mahendra Pratap on his return to Berlin also contained a complaint about Dr. Von Hentig, the German representative accompanying the Mission, who left behind in Persia 23 out of 26 Imperial German Government letters addressed by H. E. The Chancellor to the Indian Princes, and as these never reached Afghanistan, their Indian work suffered a good deal from this loss. Besides, this Mission suffered badly from lack of funds mainly due to the bungling and selfishness of Von Hentig who was controlling the funds, about which a complaint was lodged by Md. Barkataullah with the German F. O. in a letter dated Bagh-i-Babershah Kabul, Afghanistan, May 21, 1916.

#### \* OPERATION IN THE FAR EAST

In the Far East the important regions of the

Indo-German conspiracy were Siam, Burma and Malay where anti-British schemes were financed and controlled by the Consulates at Peking, Shanghai, Batavia and Bangkok. The Siam project was undertaken by the Germans and the *Ghadr* party of San Francisco combined. It aimed at collecting a force of about ten thousand men, armed and drilled with German help and stationed at Burma-Siam borders. The revolutionaries would then secure the co-operation of the Burma Military Police, half of whom were Sikhs and Mahomendans, and then would overrun Burma and finally the whole of India. Two students from Berkeley, California, viz., Sukumar Chatterjee of Jabbalpore and Darisi Chenchiah, a Madrasite of Nellore, came to Bangkok as emissaries of the *Ghadr* party. They would do the preliminary work and recommend places and forests and submit photos where all these operations were to be carried on. The German railway officers and their Punjabi overseers and surveyors would supply them with all necessary information.

Among the persons connected with the conspiracy in Siam and Burma the more prominent were Atmaram and Shiv Dayal Kapur (both coming from China), Sohan Lal Pathak, Jodh Singh Mahajan (*alias* Hassan Zada), Harnam Singh, Narain Singh etc. These men and many others of the *Ghadr* party came to Siam from the U. S. A. and the Far East in 1914-15. Sohan Lal who was arrested at Maymyo in Burma (August 14, 1915) was perhaps the leader of the *Ghadr* men in these sectors as proved by a letter from Ram Chandra Peshwari in San Francisco to Sohan Lal intercepted at Singapore in June, 1915. At the time of his arrest three automatic pistols and about 270 cartridges, besides several papers including a copy of 'New Light and New Science' by Hardy, were found with him. Five days later Narayin Singh was arrested

at Maymyo with a fully loaded pistol, a considerable quantity of the Turkish *fatawah* and a copy of the *Ghadr*. Harnam Singh was arrested in Moulmein on his way back to Siam. All these three were executed—Sohan Lal Pathak under the Defence of India Act and the other two in the Mandalay Conspiracy Case. Shiv Dayal Kapur was arrested at Bangkok (August, 1915), in whose note-book was “a pencil-sketch of a ship with three horizontal lights at the mast head. Above this the following notes were made in Hindusthani : ‘Schooner; 1st August; 500 revolvers; Chittagong, and below was written ‘Anjer’ in English and the words ‘Java town’ in Hindusthani”. Obviously, this referred to the scheme of the schooner *Henry S*.

Besides, two parties of Indians who entered Burma from Siam through the Raheng-Mesort-Myawaddy route—the first consisting of five Indians and an American, Charles W. Allan, and the second consisting of sixteen Sikhs and one Mahomedan,—were arrested in early May, 1915. All these arrests struck a death-blow to the conspiracy in this sector. These arrests led to the Mandalay Conspiracy Case of which the Judgment was delivered on July 27, 1916. Of the seventeen persons tried in this case, seven comprising Harnam Singh, Chelliah Ram, Bassawa Singh, Narain Singh, Narinjan Singh, Pala Singh and Kirpa Ram were sentenced to death. Five received life sentence, one seven years’ transportation and four were acquitted.<sup>86</sup>

The Siam conspiracy directed itself also to the project of attacking the Andaman Islands and freeing the prisoners therein. About this part of the conspiracy an interesting account is revealed in Mr. Ker’s book. Mr. Ker’s information is derived mostly from a European employed by the German Secret Service, arrested

86. The Judgment in the Mandalay Conspiracy Case: Vide Home (Poll. A) Proceedings of the Govt. of India, September 1916, Nos. 403-10.

in Singapore (July, 1915), and who has been referred to by Mr. Ker as X. About this episode Mr. Ker writes :

"It appeared from the statement of X that one of the German plans was to take the Andaman Islands before raising a revolt in Burma and India. First of all an agent was to go to the Andamans, in the guise of a merchant, and to land arms supplied from German sources; he was then to get into touch with released prisoners who were working on their own ground, and arrange with them to destroy the wireless station on an appointed night. One or two of some twelve German ships laid up in Sabang, after getting together the fittest of the crews of all the vessels, and taking as many Germans from Del (Sumatra) as possible, were to leave for the Nicobars; here they would pick up quick-firers, guns and ammunition, which would be previously deposited by pre-concerted arrangement. The ships would then proceed to the Andamans so as to arrive there on the night fixed for the destruction of the wireless station, landings being effected at the same time on both the East and the West side of the islands. After this had been done, and the place had been captured, as many of the convicts as were fit and willing were to be shipped under German leadership, to a place near Rangoon. If the undertaking seemed to promise success, all Germans of military age in the Dutch East Indies and Siam would be ordered to join the insurrectionary force. X had with him three detailed maps of the Andamans, and some photographs of Aberdeen Jail, and was well informed as to the numbers of officials, troops, police and warders on the islands".<sup>87</sup>

#### THE SINGAPORE MUTINY

Although this part of the conspiracy remained un-

87. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*.



realized, yet the Sepoys at Singapore actually revolted in February, 1915. The Indian battalion at Singapore was the Fifth Light Infantry, comprising almost entirely of Moslems from India. On February 15, 1915 they revolted under the instigation of the Ghadarites and recklessly murdered a number of Europeans including military officers, soldiers, and civilians. They kept the city under their control until the evening of February 18. Although the mutineers had released many German prisoners, yet no help was forthcoming either from them or from other sources as had been fondly expected. So the mutiny was easily suppressed.

About the genesis and subsequent development of the Singapore Mutiny Lt. General MacMunn observes the following:

"On the 15th, Major-General D. Ridout, commanding at Singapore, inspected the 5th, prior to the battalion embarking. All was quiet and in order, but as the battalion's ammunition was being loaded into lorries at the Alexandra Barracks, a shot was fired. An outbreak immediately followed. Those who tried to keep order were shot down... The mutineers, at first at sixes and sevens, now broke up into three parties, one to overpower the men guarding the German internment camp and release the prisoners; another to attack the Colonel's house, and a third to prevent any assistance arriving down the road from Singapore. Further, several small parties made off, apparently to murder stray Europeans". For three days bloody scenes were enacted in the streets of Singapore. But lacking in ammunition and resources, the mutineers could hardly hold their own for long. Lt. General MacMunn writes further: "By the morning of the 18th the aggregate of armed forces was sufficient for General Ridout to occupy the whole of the scene of the tragedy, Tanglin, Alexandra Barracks, and Normanton... By the evening of the 18th, the situation was completely in hand,

and residents returned to their houses. Some 300 mutineers only were at large, and these were driven into the jungle... Two of the leaders were hanged, thirty-eight were shot, all in public. The incident was over, and the 5th Light Infantry were no more."<sup>88</sup>

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88. Vide Lt. General Sir George MacMunn: *Turmoil & Tragedy In India: 1914 And After* (London, 1935, pp. 105-113). Also see *Aprakasha Rajneshik Itihas*, pp. 23-24.



**Rash Behari Bose**  
( May 25, 1886—January 21, 1945 )



Rash Behari Bose with his wife Toshiko Bose

## CHAPTER TWO

# RASH BEHARI BOSE AS A REVOLUTIONARY

### BOYHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

One of the greatest leaders and architects of India's revolutionary movement, Rash Behari Bose played a most potent and dynamic role in the achievement of Independence by India in 1947. If Aurobindo Ghose is regarded as the Mazzini of Young India, Rash Behari Bose may be fitly called the Cavour of India's Freedom Movement.

Born in the village, of Parala-Bighati near Bhadreswar in the district of Hooghly in the house of his maternal uncle on May 25, 1886<sup>1</sup>, Rash Behari Bose passed his childhood in his paternal home at the village of Subaldaha in the Burdwan district under the care of his grandfather Kali Charan Bose. He received his early education at Chandernagore where his father Benode Behari Bose had purchased a house. His father, at first a Government servant in the Bengal Secretariat, later secured a job in the Government press at Simla in U. P. Never a "good" boy in the conventional sense of the term, Rash Behari in his boyhood showed in his character signs of turbulence and refused to bend his neck to authority on asking.

1. Rash Behari's own sister Sushila Devi, at present aged about seventy-eight, has recently informed the present writer when she met her at Benares that both her elder brother and herself were born in their maternal uncle's house at the village of Parala-Bighati in the Hooghly district. This view fits in also with the findings of Sri Harihar Sett of Chandernagore. But in a written statement dated April 16, Kunja Behari Mandal of the village Subaldaha in the Burdwan district, then aged about 104, categorically states on the basis of his own direct knowledge that Rash Behari Bose, the eldest son of Benode Behari Bose, his friend, was born at the village of Subaldaha (vide the *Prabartak Sangha's* fortnightly organ *Naba Sangha*, dated April 19, 1916, p. 1).

None was aware at that time of the immense promise that this wayward boy had in him for the future.

While a student of the Second Class at the College Dupleix (now known as Kanailal Vidyamandir) in Chandernagore, Rash Behari had a confrontation with his teachers, which soon forced him to leave that school and take new admission in the Morton School, Calcutta. But a comfortable routine life was never destined for him. His innate nature always goaded him to beat new tracks of adventure. An expert lathi-player from boyhood, he soon took fancy to the idea of entering the British army with the immediate object of learning the art of modern warfare. As the desire deepened, he fled away twice from his home to try his luck as a potential recruit in the army, but apparently having failed in his mission, he returned home with subdued feelings of frustration. The fact that a Bengali was debarred from admission into the British army on the fancied ground of his physical unfitness was a painful experience to him and this instead of cooling his enthusiasm made him more determined to remove the slur of timidity from the face of the Bengali race. From that time onwards he gave up his routine study and education in school. Disillusioned by her son's wayward life, his mother took him before long to Simla and got him employed through his father in the Government press in the post of a copyholder. Rash Behari utilised the occasion in mastering the English language as well as type-writing. But here also Rash Behari could not pull on well for a long time, and under command from his father who suspected his complicity in a press trouble, he had to resign his post. This was followed by his third flight from home, opening a completely new chapter in his career.<sup>2</sup>

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2. These facts about Rash Behari's early life have been, in the main, drawn from Prof. Bejon Behari Bose's (his younger brother's) Bengali work entitled *Karmabir Rash Behari* published in 1956.

### RASH BEHARI IN DEHRA DUN

Having served for a short period in the Pasteur Institute of Kasauli (South-West of Simla), Rash Behari came to Dehra Dun in or about the year 1906 and was probably employed as a laboratory assistant to Sirdar Puran Singh who was in charge of the Chemistry Department in the Forest Research Institute.<sup>3</sup>) While at Dehra Dun, Rash Behari at first took shelter in the Tagore Villa, the garden house of Prafulla Nath Tagore, grandson of Kali Krishna Tagore. Atul Chandra Bose (though mistakenly referred to in the I. B. Records of the Government of West Bengal as Atul Chandra Ghose), the care-taker and manager of the Tagore Villa, took kindly to Rash Behari without his master's remotest idea about it. Rash Behari stayed there for some time. Even after his change of residence he regularly frequented the Tagore Villa where a group of young men met together and discussed various topics. Sri Prasanta Nath Tagore, the third son of Prafulla Nath Tagore, informs the writer that the Villa consisting of 100 bighas of land and looked after by a redoubtable manager with his quarters situated at a remote corner of the garden and surrounded by mango and lichi trees, naturally offered a very congenial shelter to Rash Behari as well as to the Bengali young men plotting secret activities at Dehra Dun. It is also reported that Rash Behari even arranged for bomb manufacture in that garden Villa and was sometimes helped with money by its 'sympathetic' manager from funds placed at his disposal by the owner for its proper maintenance.<sup>4</sup> The Intelligence Branch Records of the Government of West Bengal affirm that "Rash Behari

3. The Judgment in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1914, however, describes Rash Behari as the Head Clerk of the Forest Research Institute.

Bose, Atul Ghose, Haripada Bose and one Sailen Banerjee used to meet daily at Dehra Dun and were very friendly to each other". They further disclose that Jogindra Nath Chatterjee, a prominent pleader of Allahabad High Court, came to Dehra Dun for a change and stayed for a few months at the Tagore Villa. Rash Behari and his associates were regular visitors to Jogin Babu.

#### CONTACT WITH J. M. CHATTERJEE

A memorable episode of this period was Rash Behari's contact with Jitendra Mohan Chatterjee at Dehra Dun. Jitendra Mohan, a resident of Saharanpur where his father was a Government pleader, had already started there a secret society following the Partition of Bengal<sup>5</sup> with the object of taking revenge against the inhuman cruelties and oppression of the British soldiers, particularly at the railway stations. In 1906, he came to Dehra Dun on the occasion of the marriage ceremony of his nephew (eldest son of his elder sister) and put up for four or five days at the house of his brother-in-law Purna Chandra Banerjee. In that *milieu* he picked up intimacy with Rash Behari who also attended that marriage ceremony. From his talk with Rash Behari Jitendra Mohan could get a glimpse of the working of the latter's mind, and the intimacy thus formed later proved a valuable asset to the revolutionary movement.

The Punjab and the United Provinces were at that time important centres of Bengali revolutionary activities. Bengal's role as an inspirer of the revolutionary spirit in the Punjab was embodied, first, by Jatindra Nath Banerjee (later known as Swami Niralamba) and then by Rash Behari Bose. After his

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5. *Vide India's Fight For Freedom* (Calcutta, 1958, Chapter I) written jointly by the present writer and H. Mukherjee for a detailed account of the Bengal Partition of 1905.



split with the early band of the Bengal revolutionaries headed by Barindra Kumar Ghose, Jatindra Nath left Calcutta on a roving mission. In course of his travel he came to the Punjab in 1906 and got together a group of young men and inspired them with the ideal of *Swaraj* or Self-Rule for India even by violent revolutionary methods. This group included, among others, Lal Chand Phalak, Kissen Singh (father of Bhagat Singh), Lala Lajpat Rai, Sirdar Ajit Singh as well as Dr. Hari Charan Mukherjee of Ambala, Dr. Charu Chandra Ghose of Peshwar and Lala Amar Das of Sealkot.<sup>6</sup> On his return from England to India in early 1908 Lala Hardyal also was soon drawn close to this group, and before long he gathered round himself a band of devoted workers of whom Jitendra Mohan Chatterjee was the most prominent.<sup>7</sup> At that time Hardyal's major pre-occupation was political propaganda through speeches and writings, with a pronounced advocacy of boycott or non-co-operation with the alien Government. Although he did not openly preach at this stage any cult of violent revolution, yet it is mainly from him that his followers, after he had left for Europe, took their cue for a violent political fight against the British.

On Hardyal's departure for Europe in August, 1908 his mantle naturally fell on his comrade Jitendra Mohan Chatterjee whom he had chosen as the second

in command and whom he had so introduced to Amir Chand at the Delhi station on his way to Bombay *en route* to Europe.<sup>8</sup> Amir Chand, a rich man of Delhi and school master, had already gathered round him a band of young men including Abad Behari, Bal Raj and Bal Mokand. Jitendra Mohan got down at Delhi and put up for a few days at Amir Chand's house, and afterwards returned to Saharanpur. He then plunged into the great work assigned to him by his leader. He contacted many persons with Hardyal's letters of introduction, gathered new recruits and laid down the programme of work for the party in his own handwriting. He also sent emissaries to Rash Behari at Dehra Dun, asking him to forge links with the Bengal revolutionary groups. It is through Rash Behari's medium that Jitendra Mohan got into touch with Srish Chandra Ghose described to be "the most desperate and dangerous" figure of the Chandernagore revolutionaries.<sup>9</sup> Srish Chandra thereafter not only paid several visits to Saharanpur (1909-10), but also kept up correspondence with Rash Behari, sometimes under the pseudo name of 'Amir'.<sup>10</sup> Before long unforeseen

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8. As shortage of funds appeared to be a great impediment to political work, J. M. Chatterjee and his co-worker Churanjit Lal were engaged in 1908 in the collection of subscriptions for their party as wandering *Sadhus* or friars. In course of such missionary work, when they had once taken shelter at Sirdar Puran Singh's residence in Dehra Dun, Jitendra Mohan received a wire from Hardyal from Lahore instructing him to meet the latter at Saharanpur. Accordingly, both Jitendra Mohan and Churanjit Lal met Hardyal at Saharanpur *via* Hardwar and thence accompanied him to Delhi, where at the station Hardyal introduced Jitendra Mohan to Amir Chand as his right hand man. Amir Chand and Hardyal, both residents of Delhi, were drawn close to each other even before Hardyal had left India in 1905. It was Amir Chand who helped Hardyal in "kidnapping" his wife for her sojourn to England in 1906-07.

9. Home Deptt. (Poll. A.) Proceedings of the Govt. of India, July 1911 Nos 48-50.

10. File No. 473/14 of the I. B. Records, Govt. of West Bengal, for a letter intercepted at Delhi, in which the signatory 'Amir' requested the addressee 'Manik' to come down with some money to study the situation at first hand. The Intelligence Branch authorities of the time identified 'Manik' with Rash Behari Bose and 'Amir' with Srish Chandra Ghose.

troubles arose for Jitendra Mohan with the seizure by the police of his secret MSS embodying the party's programme of work from the office of *Jhangsyal* (a journal of Sirdar Ajit Singh) and their detection of his authorship. Warrants of arrest were issued against Sirdar Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad as the real men behind the *Jhangsyal* and the *Swaraj* respectively.<sup>11</sup> Efforts were also being made for the arrest of Jitendra Mohan who in no time decided to hand over the charge of the secret party to Rash Behari Bose (1910). He summoned Rash Behari to Saharanpur, gave him every relevant information and left for England to prosecute studies in Law.<sup>12</sup> Needless to say, Rash Behari also had not been idle at Dehra Dun during this time; he was also busy weaving schemes of work and getting together a band of ardent spirits.

After Jitendra Mohan's retirement from the Indian scene, Rash Behari Bose naturally assumed the central command of the Punjab revolutionaries, and his Dehra Dun residence became a *rendezvous* of secret political activities. As Mr. Denham of the Intelligence Branch wrote in his report: "As far as can be ascertained at present Dehra Dun appears to have been the meeting place between the Bengal and Punjab conspirators; Rash Behari Bose had resided there for seven years and had obtained a position of importance in the Bengali community".<sup>13</sup> At Dehra Dun Rash Behari's activities were canalised in two main directions, first, to secure secretly acid from his office laboratory for

11. In 1909 Sirdar Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad absconded to Persia.

12. It has been personally learnt from Barrister J. M. Chatterjee at Dehra-Dun that it was he who introduced Rash Behari Bose to the Punjab and Delhi group of revolutionaries by providing him with several letters of introduction to various persons before he left for England. This point receives corroboration also in the Judgment in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1914.

13. Mr. Denham's third and final Report on the Rajabazar Case, dated March 26, 1914.

the manufacture of explosives, and, secondly, to purchase second-hand revolvers from the retired Gurkha officers. He also sent a letter to Jitendra Mohan Chatterjee at London with the request to arrange for the despatch of some revolvers to him through a London book-seller; but the idea did not materialize because of the sudden critical turn in the Indian situation following the Hardinge bomb outrage.

#### INITIATION IN THE CULT OF ATMA-SAMARPAN

In early 1911 Rash Behari came down to Chandernagore on receiving the news of his mother's illness, and thanks to Srish Chandra Ghose, he was before long introduced to Moti Lal Roy, the then leader of the Chandernagore group of revolutionaries. A devoted follower of Aurobindo Ghose and the founder of the Prabartak Sangha at Chandernagore, Moti Lal Roy cast a great influence on his junior colleague. Rash Behari was inspired with the Gita ideal of *Atma-samarpana* or self-surrender and he took the solemn vow of dedicating himself wholly and completely to the supreme cause. As Moti Lal Roy puts it:

"I remember the day when Rash Behari Bose first came to me with my revolutionary disciple and colleague Srish Chandra Ghose. We were sitting together closetted in the small historic room where Sri Aurobindo sat hiding a few months before during his abscondage at Chandernagore. Inspiring words seemed to pour out of me, while I was explaining to him the spiritual Yoga of *Atma-samarpana* that had been revealed to me by Sri Aurobindo. Rash Behari seemed to drink in the spiritual message in deep silence. Then suddenly at the end of the discourse, he burst forth in ecstatic exclamation:

"It is God's instrumentality—a spiritual automation—isn't Motilal! I have to move about with my

head held in the palm of my hand. So, indeed, shall I do!"<sup>14</sup>.

In the meantime Rash Behari's mother died and as his leave expired, he returned to Dehra Dun for some time. This, however, was followed by his long leave probably from September, 1911 and his return to Chandernagore. During this period fruitful discussions were held among Moti Lal Roy, Srish Chandra Ghose and Rash Behari Bose, on the one hand, and Pratul Chandra Ganguli of the Anusilan Samiti, on the other. In course of these discussions, precisely after the annulment of the Bengal Partition at the Delhi Durbar in December, 1911, the idea of throwing a bomb at Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, caught the imagination of this young group. The evident object of the plot was to demoralise the British bureaucrats in India by striking terror into their heart and to demonstrate in the most convincing way possible that the Government's new repression-cum-conciliation policy would not pay in the long run.

#### RASH BEHARI AND THE HARDINGE BOMB PLOT

According to Moti Lal Roy, the idea of throwing a bomb at Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, sprang from Srish Chandra Ghose's brain, and Rash Behari immediately took it up to give it a practical shape.<sup>15</sup> With that end in view, he brought to Dehra Dun along with him a young man, Basanta Kumar Biswas, ostensibly as his cook and personal attendant. Basanta Biswas and Manmatha Biswas were two cousin

14. Moti Lal Roy's statement printed on the cover of J. G. Ohsawa's *The Two Great Indians In Japan* (Calcutta, 1954).

15. The truth of Moti Lal Roy's statement dated 29.6.55 is also borne out by Pratul Chandra Ganguli of the Anusilan Samiti. In a written statement dated July 4, 1955 Pratul Chandra Ganguli says that the plan of throwing a bomb at Lord Hardinge was hatched by Moti Lal Roy's Chandernagore group of revolutionaries then working in close co-operation with the Anusilan Samiti of which Ganguli was himself an important leader.

brothers of Poragacha in the Nadia district and had for some time been staying with Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpara as workers of the "Sramajibi Samabaya", a Swadeshi workshop housed in the present Y. M. C. A. building at the junction of Harrison Road (Mahatma Gandhi Road) and the College Street, Calcutta. Opened in 1908 as a business concern through the joint efforts of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee and Khirode Ganguli, the Swadeshi shop soon grew into a centre of revolutionary activities with Moti Lal Roy and Srish Chandra Ghose of Chandernagore as among its regular visitors. The Biswas brothers, originally enlisted for the "Sramajibi Samabaya" by Khirode Ganguli, the Headmaster of the Poragacha School, were afterwards handed over to Moti Lal Roy by Amarendra Nath Chatterjee for the revolutionary cause. Moti Lal introduced them to Rash Behari who selected Basanta for his secret mission.

Having trained up Basanta for several months at Dehra Dun with the utmost care and precision, Rash Behari escorted him to Lahore and got him employed, thanks to Bal Mokand's help, in the Popular Dispensary as a Compounder. On or about October 13, 1912, Rash Behari held a secret meeting in a room adjoining the Agarwal Asram, where, besides himself, Abad Behari, Dina Nath and Bal Mokand were present. "At that meeting it is said that a plan of campaign was formed, and that it was decided to issue leaflets and organize the throwing of a bomb and that Abad Behari, Dina Nath and Bal Mokand were appointed heads of the organization"<sup>16</sup>. Shortly after this Rash Behari visited Chandernagore to give a finishing touch to his preparatory work. During this short visit he met one day Sri Nalini Kishore Guha at

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16. The Judgment of M. Harrison, the Additional Sessions Judge in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case, dated October 6 1914.

88, Upper Circular Road (where a 'mess of the Anusilan Samiti' opposite to the Rajabazar centre of Amrita Lal Hazra was situated) and asked him to write an article in the *Swadhin Bharat* denouncing the celebrations proposed to be held in honour of Lord Hardinge's State-entry into Delhi as very much detrimental to the national honour and interests of Indians. Rash Behari also provided Sri Guha with instructions typed in a small piece of paper kept hidden in the folded cuff of his shirt. Nalini Kishore Guha acted accordingly, although he was unaware at that time of the underlying plot.

(According to plan, Basanta Kumar Biswas left Lahore for Delhi by December 21, 1912 and Abad Behari also followed suit in no time. Basanta Kumar at Delhi put up at the house of Amir Chand, and it appears that Abad Behari also was away from Lahore at the time of the outrage<sup>17</sup>. On the fateful day of December 23, 1912 Rash Behari also appeared in Delhi in order to conduct the bomb-throwing operation under his personal guidance. As the Viceregal procession was entering Delhi in right royal pomp engaging everybody's attention, suddenly cracked a bomb on the elephant on which the Viceroy was seated, killing instantaneously an attendant and injuring the Viceroy seriously. In the ensuing pandemonium both Rash Behari and Basanta successfully disappeared from the scene. Although the plot in its fulness could not be executed (which aimed at killing the Viceroy), yet the effect produced was nonetheless significant. A

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17. *Ibid.* The Judge states in this context thus: "The evidence on the subject is entirely circumstantial and consists in the fact that Basanta Kumar Biswas left Lahore a couple of days before the bomb was thrown under suspicious circumstances, that Abad Behari was also away from Lahore at the time, and that Dina Nath, the approver, had a conversation with Abad Behari which showed that the latter knew the details of how that bomb was thrown.... Both of them returned in January 1913, and Abad Behari remained in Lahore.... from January to June, 1918".

feeling of horror swept over the country and the Government, after an initial set-back, resorted to more rigorous repression.

As regards the incident of bomb-throwing at the Viceroy different views have been expressed by the leaders connected with the plot. Moti Lal Roy has stated: "The youth who actually threw the bomb in the guise of a beautiful lady spectator from a housetop at Chandnichak on that gala occasion was the late Basanta Kumar Biswas—a recruit from Nadia, who was sent to me by Shree Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpara at my call for two youths required for this action and I was requested by Rash Behari to allow Basanta whom he selected, to accompany him to Delhi. There he was put up in the house of Amir Chand as arranged by Rash Behari, whence dressed as a young lady with the name of Luxmee Bai, he went to the place of occurrence along with Rash Behari. After the bomb-incident, Basanta threw off the woman's dress and melted away in the crowd".

Amarendra Nath Chatterjee in his unpublished Bengali MSS *Bharater Swadhinatar Itihas* has said: "The general idea is that Basanta threw the bomb from a house-top in the guise of a woman. It is wrong. It was Basanta Kumar who threw the bomb from the street—Rash Behari did not throw it. Rash Behari by arranging for Basanta Kumar's escape returned to Dehra Dun by night" (p. 36). This piece of information Amarendra Nath derived from Basanta Kumar who met him at the "Sramajibi Samabaya" on his way to Nadia *via* Calcutta some time after the Hardinge bomb outrage.

From the above statements it is apparent that Basanta Kumar as a trusted agent of Rash Behari threw the bomb at the Viceroy. He was to put on a woman's dress according to a previous arrangement. But a closer second thought of the difficulties that



might arise from the contemplated course probably prompted Rash Behari to make a last-minute change in the operation plan.

But this view is contested by some on the strength of a statement made by Rash Behari Bose himself in 1943: "Thirty years ago I threw a bomb at the Viceroy"<sup>18</sup>. Apparently, the critics consider the statements of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee and Moti Lal Roy about Basanta incompatible with Rash Behari's own statement. But rightly understood, there is hardly any inner contradiction between the two views. That Rash Behari was the life and soul of the Delhi bomb outrage goes without dispute. It was Rash Behari who selected Basanta for the special purpose and trained him up for it. Rash Behari was also physically present at Delhi on that fateful day to guide Basanta in the working out of the plot. Thus it is evident that Rash Behari was the moving spirit on the scene in connection with the bomb-throwing. Even without throwing the bomb himself (the last act in the plot) he might have very truthfully claimed that he had thrown the bomb at the Viceroy. Basanta was his chosen instrument, as it was Basanta who actually threw the bomb as clearly stated by Amarendra Nath Chatterjee. Denham's statement that "Basanta was, in fact, Rash Behari's 'jackal', and Rash Behari himself appears to have kept clear of any direct participation and acts of violence, devoting his attention principally to propagandism and the engineering of the conspiracy" throws further light on the issue in question<sup>19</sup>.

Immediately after the bomb outrage Rash Behari fled to Dehra Dun and organized a meeting of the

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18. Rash Behari Bose's statement entitled "Our Struggle" (1943) as incorporated in *Rash Behari Bose: His Struggle For India's Independence* (Calcutta 1963, p. 222).

19. Mr. Denham's third and final Report on the Rajabazar Case, dated 26.3.1914.

employees of the Forest Research Institute in which he vehemently condemned the criminal attack on the Viceroy. He adopted this policy even in public meetings also, the obvious motive being to hoodwink and befool the police, and in this he was very much successful<sup>20</sup>.

On account of his pronounced pro-Government speeches and actions at Dehra Dun Rash Behari won very soon the favour of the police officers of the U. P. and the Punjab. One of them, Sushil Chandra Ghose, picked up intimacy with him, probably with the object of eliciting information from him about his relative Srish Chandra Ghose, the political suspect of Chander-nagore; but Rash Behari also in his turn utilised this contact with the police for his own purposes. He pursued his policy with such an ability as to mislead even the spying Bengali police officer from Dehra Dun to report about Rash Behari that "it is the general belief there, amongst the Bengali community, that Rash Behari was a police spy and used to supply information to the C. I. D. officers".<sup>21</sup> In the battle of wits Rash Behari obviously proved the stronger. The trying Judge in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case observed that "Rash Behari was an even cleverer man than he is generally supposed to have been, and that he made use of his connection with the police to further the ends of this conspiracy". Rash Behari, by his speeches and actions, produced at that time such a

20. It is worthwhile to notice in this connection what Lord Hardinge wrote in his book entitled *My Indian Years: 1910-16* (London, 1948).

At Dehra Dun "when driving in a car from the station to my bungalow," wrote Lord Hardinge, "I passed an Indian standing in front of the gate of his house with several others, all of whom were very demonstrative in their salaams. On my inquiring I was told that the principal Indian there had presided two days before at a public meeting at Dehra Dun and had proposed and carried a vote of condolence with me on account of the attack on my life. It was proved later that it was this identical Indian who threw the bomb at me" (p. 83).

21. The Weekly Report of the Intelligence Branch, Bengal, dated July 29, 1914.

favourable impression on the police as he was even allowed to enter the Circuit House at Dehra Dun when the Viceroy Hardinge had come there for treatment following the Delhi outrage.

#### THE LAHORE BOMB OUTRAGE (1913)

The second overt act committed under the inspiration of Rash Behari Bose was the Lahore bomb outrage on May 17, 1913. The target of this bomb was Mr. Gordon, the former Sub-Divisional Officer of Sylhet, under whose orders the police raid on the Jagatsi Ashram of Swami Dayananda was conducted (1912), killing Mahendra Nath De, the ex-Head Master of the Habiganj National School, and for taking whose life Jogendra Chakravarty of the Anusilan Samiti had sacrificed his life at Maulavibazar (March 27, 1913). The schemer of the details of the plot was Abad Behari and the thrower of the bomb was the same Basanta Biswas, both being Rash Behari's trusted lieutenants. Two or three days before the incident, Abad Behari received clear instruction from Rash Behari through his letter written to Dina Nath.<sup>22</sup> He thought out the details of the operation plan and at the scheduled hour when a group of Europeans including Mr. Gordon, then an Assistant Commissioner of the Punjab, were seated at the bar in the Lawrence Gardens, both Abad Behari and Basanta Biswas appeared on the scene, secretly carrying a bomb with them. But as Basanta's courage failed at the last moment, he placed the missile on the Library Road instead of throwing it at Mr. Gordon, thus eventually causing the death of one unfortunate *chaprasi* on his way back home. Although not a single bit of evidence could be obtained in connection with the Delhi outrage, clues were found out of the Lahore bomb incident.

22. The Judgment in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case, dated October 5, 1914.

Consequently,<sup>4</sup> a conspiracy case was instituted in 1914 against eleven persons of whom Amir Chand, Abad Behari, Bal Mokand and Basanta Biswas were ultimately hanged.

#### NATURE OF THE DELHI-LAHORE BOMBS

Different sources indicate that the Delhi bomb was supplied to Rash Behari Bose by the Chandernagore group of revolutionaries then headed by Moti Lal Roy. It was a picric acid bomb of the Dalhousie Square and Midnapore type (used on March 2, 1911 and Dec. 13, 1912) manufactured by Manindra Nath Naik of Chandernagore and finally tested by Suresh Chandra Datta of the Ripon College (now the Surendra Nath College), Calcutta. Sri Naik has informed the writer that an experimental bomb exactly similar to that sent to Delhi was caused to burst in the presence of Rash Behari and Srish Ghose in the bamboo bush behind Rash Behari's Fatakgora house in Chandernagore on the Kali Puja night (November 8) in the year 1912.<sup>23</sup> Satisfied with its potency, Rash Behari sanctioned it for use in the proposed Delhi outrage. The Lahore bomb was also similar to the Delhi bomb, and in the opinion of the Sessions Judge in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case, the Lahore bomb was in all probability supplied by Rash Behari Bose. That the Delhi and Lahore bombs were almost indetical in composition is clearly pointed out in the following letter of the Chemical Examiner to the Government of the Punjab and North Western Frontier Province to the Superintendent of Police, Lahore, dated May 22, 1913. Referring to the Lahore bomb he writes:

23. Vide the writer's interview with Sri Manindra Nath Naik, who was in those days in charge of bomb making at Chandernagore. Sri Naik states that the Delhi bomb was brought to Calcutta by Nalin Chandra Datta and, having been tested by Professor Suresh Chandra Datta of the Ripon College, was taken to Delhi (or elsewhere) by Jyotish Sinha of Chandernagore.

"It is hardly necessary for me to note the similarity between this bomb and that used last December in the attempt on the life of His Excellency the Viceroy at Delhi. The same explosives were used in both cases, and the small fragments of tin foil, jute carding needles, and pieces of wire were exactly similar in both. There can be no doubt that the two bombs were practically identical in composition and construction". He further traced the identity of the Lahore bomb with the bombs used at Midnapore and Maulavibazar in December, 1912 and March, 1913 respectively.<sup>24</sup>

A fair idea of the Delhi-Lahore bombs may be formed from the following report of Major J. W. Turner, Inspector of Explosives to the Intelligence Branch, Bengal, dated January 8, 1914, on the unexploded Chandernagore bomb (a like-type of the Delhi-Lahore bombs) thrown at the Bhadreswar Thana on December 30, 1913.<sup>25</sup> Major Turner writes in his report thus:

"The bomb, a perfectly constructed specimen of its kind, is cylindrical in form, measuring  $3 \times 3\frac{3}{16}$  inches, weight about 1 lb. 11 ozs., and consists of the following parts:

(a) A cigarette or tobacco tin (W. D. & H. O. Wills) containing the explosive.

(b) Two iron discs, one perforated, inside the tin.

(c) Four iron clamps, about  $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{16}$  inches x 3 inches.

(d) A number of jute carding pins of varying sizes, laid point to point between the iron clamps.

(e) Iron or steel wire about 17 W. G. bound round the whole.

(f) About 11 ozs. of an explosive substance consisting of, so far as I have been able to ascertain by

24. Home Political Proceedings of the Govt. of India, Part B, No. 379, March 1915.

25. File No. 1/14 of the I. B. Records, Govt. of West Bengal.

practical tests, a mixture of Picric acid and Chlorate of Potash, with a piece of guncotton wool for igniting the charge.

(g) 'The paper cover or frill'.

The explosive charge generally consisted of (i) either Picric Acid and Potassium Chlorate or (ii) Ammonium Picrate, a compound from Picric Acid, both in powder form. On the outside of the tobacco tin were two layers of loom needles (i.e., jute carding pins) kept in place by iron wire. Then the tobacco tin fitted with the loom needles was kept intact by means of four clamps. At the bottom of the tin inside were a number of needles (about 25) passing through a perforated iron disc placed over them. Then the explosive substance was filled in and a second iron disc with a hole in it was placed. A hollow tube with guncotton inside went through a hole in the lid of the tin and then passed through the hole of the disc thus touching the explosive charge. Two processes were generally applied for detonating the bomb—, first, by putting phosphorus solution on the gun-cotton before the bomb was thrown and, secondly, by placing a paper cap containing potassium chlorate, antimony sulphide and red phosphorus, on the top of the tin. The cap by its contact with the earth used to burst.

#### 'LIBERTY' AS RASH BEHARI'S ORGAN

The next important event in the life of Rash Behari was the publication of the English leaflet, *Liberty*. It has already been noted that in the meeting at Lahore (October, 1912) presided over by Rash Behari Bose, an important decision was taken towards the publication of anonymous leaflets with the object of fomenting discontent in the people against the British Government. A positive step in this matter was the issue of a leaflet in English, named *Liberty*, in May, 1913 following a resolution adopted at another

meeting held by Abad Behari, Bal Mokand and Dina Nath (April, 1913). The leaflet was written by Abad Behari, printed at Kapurthala and distributed from Lahore in Northern India, preaching such ideas as the following:

"Revolution has never been the work of men. It is always God's own will worked through instruments. Those who are commissioned to bring about mighty changes were full of the force of Zeitgeist. Spirit enters into them. God Himself worked through Khudi Ram Bose, Prafulla Chaki, Kanai Lal Dutt, Madan Lal Dhingra and others (Hallowed be their sweet memories). The thrower of bomb on the representative of the tyrannical Government at Delhi was none else but the spirit of the Dispenser of all things Himself.... The debt we owe to the noble spirits of the martyrs will be paid only when young men of India will begin to come forward in numbers, each to prove a worthy successor of these departed sons....

"A grim Revolution is the greatest need of the times. Rise, brothers, in spirit. Individual incidents like the one at Delhi may strike terrors into the hearts of the tyrants but they cannot bring you the desired goal. They are helpful to a very great extent; but let us not forget the end and should lose no time for the real work. Let us be up and doing for the great work of Revolution, our cherished ideal".

The ideas expressed in the leaflet were so much akin to his own that Rash Behari sent a message of congratulation to Dina Nath stating: "Now big work should be done in the Punjab".<sup>26</sup> It needs be noted in this connection that by "big work" Rash Behari obviously meant armed rising in that sector. The second series of *Liberty* embodying a call to revolution was issued in July, 1913.

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26. The Judgment of Mr. M. Harrison, the Additional Sessions Judge in the Delhi-Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1914.

## RASH BEHARI ON LONG LEAVE

After the bomb outrage at Lahore when intensive police search was going on, Rash Behari, prompted by prudence, came down to Chandernagore in August, 1913 taking long leave on medical grounds. During this leave he frequented the Calcutta centres of the Anusilan Samiti and kept close touch with its important members. One day in September, 1913, while he was at the Badur Bagan mess in company of Pratul Chandra Ganguli, he happened to examine a few revolvers recently brought from Dacca by Biren Chatterjee. To the surprise of all one of them suddenly sent off a cartridge causing a violent sound and injuring the third finger of Rash Behari's left hand. Blood was oozing profusely from his finger. But without caring a little for the bleeding wound, he at once covered it with a bed sheet and went straight with Pratul Ganguli to the Rajabazar centre for having first aid and then left for Chandernagore at night.<sup>27</sup> It may be observed in passing that those revolvers were meant for murdering the Head Constable Haripada Deb, which was soon effected in College Square by Pratul Chandra Ganguli in alliance with Rabindra Nath Sen and Nirmal Kanta Roy on September 29, 1913.<sup>28</sup>

SACHINDRA NATH SANYAL AND THE BENGAL  
REVOLUTIONARIES

In 1913, Sachindra Nath Sanyal, the leader of the Benares group of revolutionaries, came into close con-

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27. Vide Moti Lal Roy's *Amar Dekha Biplab O Biplabi* (Calcutta, 1957, p. 101) and the writer's interview with Sri Nalini Kishore Guha of the Anusilan Samiti in April, 1965. Sri Guha has narrated to the interviewer that he was present in the Rajabazar centre when Rash Behari along with Pratul Chandra Ganguli went there just following the accident.

28. Pratul Chandra Ganguli's serial articles entitled *Biplabi Jiban-Darshan* published in the monthly *Prabasi* during 1367-68 B.S. See the *Chaitra* issue of 1368 B.S. in this connection. The fact noted above is also corroborated by Sri Prafulla Kumar Biswas of the Anusilan Samiti, now residing at Sodepur near Calcutta.



tact with the Bengal revolutionaries. As<sup>1</sup> early as 1908, Sachindra Nath had started a society at Benares, called the Anusilan Samiti, the objects of which were the promotion of the physical, moral and intellectual qualities of its members. After the Anusilan Samiti of Dacca had been proclaimed as an unlawful institution, Sachindra Nath renamed his society as the Young Men's Association within which he developed an inner circle of close following. This innermost group led by Sachindra Nath was imbued with the ideal of working out the country's liberation by blood and fire, and were therefore sceptical of the moderate views of the parent organization. At the close of 1912 or early 1913, Sachindra Nath seceded from the parent body and "formed a new party the object of which was to get in touch with the Bengal anarchists and to carry on a similar work in the United Provinces. The obtaining of arms and ammunition, the manufacture of bombs, the distribution of seditious literature, and tampering with the loyalty of the troops were among the means to be employed. From this time the activities of Sachindra and his friends became definitely criminal in character. Sachindra did in fact get in touch with the Bengal anarchists through one Makhan Babu who introduced him to Sasanka Mohan Hazra, and Sachindra used to visit Bengal from time to time and obtain both funds and bombs from that source. In the autumn of 1913 seditious literature was distributed by hand to a number of schools and colleges in Benares, while some members pasted seditious leaflets on walls, and other copies of leaflets were distributed through the post".<sup>29</sup>

According to Denham's Report on "Benares as a Centre of Revolutionary Activity" (June, 1915), Rash

29. The Judgment in the Benares Conspiracy Case, as reported in the *Statesman* of February 15, 1916.

Behari secretly met the Benares revolutionaries during his visits to that place in course of 1912. Both Nalini Mohan Mukherjee and Bisweswar Goswami of Benares have informed the present writer independently that they met Rash Behari for the first time in Benares as early as 1912. It is therefore almost certain that Rash Behari also met Sachindra Nath at Benares about this time. But Sachindra Nath was not drawn close to Rash Behari until his visit to Calcutta in the later part of the following year (1913). As Sachindra Nath's interview with Makhan Lal Sen bore no fruit, he went to the Rajabazar centre of Amrita Lal Hazra (alias Sasanka) and Pratul Chandra Ganguli of the Anusilan Samiti who in their turn introduced him to Srish Chandra Ghose, Moti Lal Roy and Rash Behari Bose of Chandernagore. Already by 1912 a close alliance had been forged between the Anusilan Samiti and the Chandernagore revolutionaries through the instrumentality of Pratul Chandra Ganguli and Amrita Lal Hazra. Soon after Sachindra Nath was drawn close to Rash Behari and incorporated into his inner circle. Rash Behari Bose attributed the name of "Lattu" to him in appreciation of his restless nature. It was in this *milieu* that the possibility of organizing a revolution in India jointly by the Bengal, Punjab and U. P. revolutionaries was seriously discussed and assessed by them.

Besides, during this period (1913-14) intimate personal contact was also established between Rash Behari Bose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee through the instrumentality of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee at the "Sramajibi Samabaya". In 1913 was arranged a secret meeting of these three revolutionaries under the *Panchabati* trees at Dakshineswar near Calcutta, where they discussed and devised a plan of armed rising, modelled on the Rising of 1857, with the help of the British-Indian Army. After this, Rash Behari had

also been to the Fort William to sound the feelings of the local Sepoys and Havildars<sup>30</sup>, but could not make much headway in that direction. A passion for revolution had by this time seized his mind and was goading him on. His contact with Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee added a new impulse to his revolutionary zeal. In him Rash Behari discovered a real leader of men and so he asked him to take charge of the Bengal front should such an eventuality arise in the future. Rash Behari also requested Moti Lal Roy to pay a personal visit to Pondicherry in order to obtain the blessings of Sri Aurobindo for the contemplated armed rising. In pursuance of this request Moti Lal Roy set out for Pondicherry in the guise of an Englishman with Sudarshan Chatterjee as his waiter. After three months' stay with Sri Aurobindo (Sept.-Nov., 1913) Moti Lal returned to Chandernagore with the latter's moral sanction to the cause.

#### BENGAL REVOLUTIONARIES ON TOURING MISSION

According to plan, Pratul Chandra Ganguli, accompanied by Sachindra Nath Sanyal, came to Benares to examine the suitability of Benares as a centre of future plotting. He put up at Sachindra Nath's Bengalitola residence, and after touring in Ayodhya, Lucknow, Cawnpore and Agra he returned to his base at Calcutta<sup>31</sup>. Next, Rash Behari set out to visit Benares, Delhi and Lahore with the object of mobilising the scattered forces into a revolutionary upsurge. According to Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, Jyotindra Nath also accompanied Rash Behari to Benares to forge

30. The letters of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee dated 4.8.54 and 4.9.54 incorporated in Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee's Bengali work *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* as well as the former's unpublished Bengali MSS on "*Bharater Swadhinatar Itihas*" (p. 34).

31. *Prabasi, Chaitra*, 1368 B.S. for Pratul Ganguli's article entitled *Biplabi Jiban-Darshan*.

personal contacts with the Benares group of revolutionaries then led by Sachindra Nath Sanyal. But Rash Behari's work in that sector was cut short by the Delhi searches of February, 1914 resulting in the arrest of Amir Chand, Abad Behari and a few others as well as in the issue of a warrant for his arrest (February 20, 1914). Immediately after this Rash Behari fled to Chandernagore, a French colony, to escape imprisonment. During this period a constant companion to Rash Behari was Srish Chandra Ghose who tried his utmost to protect his revolutionary comrade from all possible peril. The room of his house in which Rash Behari put up at this time was constantly kept under lock and key from outside, and Rash Behari had to perform his daily ablutions under cover of darkness. Food was also supplied to him with the utmost secrecy. On March 8, 1914 his house was suddenly searched by the Calcutta police headed by Mr. Denham and Mr. Tegart, but in spite of their best efforts no trace of Rash Behari could be obtained, although Rash Behari was not then far away from his dwelling house. About this police raid the Weekly Report of the Bengal Intelligence Branch dated July 29, 1914 states that "he (Rash Behari) was present at home on the night his house was searched at Chandernagore, and actually watched the search from behind a mango tree in his garden close by". This report finds corroboration also in Bejon Behari Bose's articles on "Nirav Viplavi Srish Chandra" as published in monthly *Pravartak* during 1958-1959. There the writer observes that Srish Chandra Ghose who could somehow anticipate the coming danger, managed to keep Rash Behari in hiding in the vicinity of his house at midnight, and as soon as the police had left the premises, the much-wanted man appeared on the scene. The same source also relates that following this police raid Srish Chandra arranged for Rash Behari's stay

at Hatkhola for some time under the care of Narendra Nath Banerjee.

#### RASH BEHARI'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER

Meanwhile the political situation of the country was rapidly taking a critical turn, and Rash Behari's stay at Chandernagore was also coming to an abrupt end. He preferred the perils of adventure to a life of safety in hiding for an indefinite period. His passion for revolution soon led him to undertake once again organizing work in Northern India. Before he went underground with the warrant of arrest dogging his footsteps and a Punjab Government announcement of a reward of Rs. 5,000 (later enhanced to Rs. 12,000 or more) for his detection, he posted a touching letter from Calcutta to his father at Simla (early April, 1914) which, in part, reads as follows:

"After crores of salutations, my submission is this that you have surely heard by this time that I am now entangled in a net of dangers of the most terrible nature. Though God knows that I am wholly innocent, yet through the influence of my stars, I am today in the eyes of all, an accused in the Delhi case. This is perhaps my last letter. But I trust you will never look upon me as faithless and guilty. I say in the name of God that I am wholly innocent. Be that as it may, everything is happening through the influence of stars and I too am being drifted along in their revolutions. What can I do? Man can never alter fate. Besides, when the most mighty Government is my antagonist, it will be extremely difficult (for me) to obtain justice in the Court. However, whatever is decreed by fate, will come to happen. I had been dreaming of how you might get happiness in the end of your life, when the terrible bolt from heaven fell. Don't waste money for nothing by engaging a pleader.

for me, for it is almost an impossibility to fight against the Government... I resign everything into the hands of God; do pray to Him for my welfare".<sup>32</sup>

#### RASH BEHARI IN BENARES

Since the issue of a warrant for his arrest in February, 1914 Rash Behari Bose began to carry on his revolutionary activities from behind the scenes. After spending a few weeks at Chandernagore in concealment, he finally left Bengal and made his new headquarters at Benares. At Benares he worked as an underground revolutionary from April, 1914 to January, 1915. During this period he put up for a few months in the house of a retired health officer at Missir Pokhra. At day time he did not generally stir out of doors and would come out only after dusk to meet his comrades either at the *ghats* of the Ganges or on the river bed. The skill and ingenuity with which he kept himself concealed at this period from the gaze of the police, surprised even his enemies. The Special Commissioners appointed in the Benares Conspiracy Case observed in this connection:

"It is a remarkable fact that Rash Behari, though a reward was offered for his arrest and his photograph had been widely circulated, should have succeeded in living in Benares during nearly the whole of the year 1914 without the police being aware of his presence."<sup>33</sup>

At Benares Rash Behari gave a new momentum to the revolutionary forces and "practically took charge of the movement" with Sachindra Nath Sanyal as his chief lieutenant. The main plank of his operation was

32. The Intelligence Branch Records of the Government of West Bengal preserve to this day the official English translation of the aforesaid letter of Rash Behari (originally written in Bengali) to his father bearing the Calcutta postmark and reaching his father at Simla on April 9, 1914.
33. The Judgment in the Benares Conspiracy Case dated 14.2.1916 as reported in the *Statesman* on the following date.

to organize an armed rising by the Bengal, Punjab and U. P. revolutionaries acting in unison with the British Indian army. Among the persons who used to frequent the Missir Pokhra residence of Rash Behari we come across Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Nalini Mohan Mukherjee, Narendra Nath Banerjee, Preo Nath Bhattacharya, Bibhuti Bhusan Haldar, Ashutosh Roy, Manmatha Biswas etc. To these persons Rash Behari often explained the mechanism of bombs and revolvers as well as the technique to operate them. The bombs were of the Chandernagore type whose cap remained detached from the main body of the bomb and only at the time of throwing it the cap was attached to cause percussion. On November 18, 1914, while Rash Behari was examining some bombs recently brought from Calcutta, two bomb caps suddenly exploded producing an alarming sound and causing severe injuries to Rash Behari's person. Sachindra Nath Sanyal also was slightly wounded.

#### PINGLEY'S CONTACT WITH RASH BEHARI

Immediately after this accident Rash Behari changed his residence from Missir Pokhra to Bengalitola in Benares and thence to a house on the Harish Chandra Ghat Road.<sup>34</sup> While living at Bengalitola, he was visited by V. G. Pingley, a Marathi young man of Telegaon of the Poona district. After the break-up of the Samartha Vidyalaya of which he was a student,<sup>35</sup> Pingley had been to America in 1911 to join the University at Seattle; but, within a short time he was caught

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34. In Bengalitola Rash Behari had to change his residence frequently from Madanpura to Debnathpura, from Debnathpura to Khalispura etc. just to escape the notice of the police. Throughout his absconding life in India he used to put on masked attire, sometimes even the dress of a woman. Rash Behari in the dress of a Punjabi or a Pathan was a very common feature.

35. For a brief idea of the Samartha Vidyalaya and its connection with the National Council of Education, Bengal, see the book entitled *The Origins Of The National Education Movement* (Calcutta, 1937, p. 130) written by the present writer jointly with H. Mukherjee.

in the whirlwind of *Ghadr* politics in America, and returned home as a confirmed Ghadarite on November 20, 1914. Through the instrumentality of Satyen Sen, his companion, a nephew of Bejoy Krishna Roy of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee's party, Pingley soon came into touch with Jyotin Mukherjee and with a letter of introduction from the latter met Rash Behari at Benares. Pingley informed Rash Behari of the arrival of thousands of *Ghadr* men in the Punjab with the avowed object of consummating a revolution in India and of the prospective arrival of a few more thousands after the movement was set on foot.

A veteran organizer of conspiracy, Rash Behari sent Pingley accompanied by Sachindra Nath Sanyal to the Punjab to gather first-hand information of the Punjab situation. It is to be observed in this connection that in October, 1914 several thousands of Sikhs of the *Ghadr* party had actually arrived in the Punjab with the mission of organizing a revolution in India. These men included Nawab Khan, Mula Singh, Nidhon Singh, Udham Singh and many others. In course of November-December, 1914 a few "actions" were planned and even attempted by these men, but all proved abortive. The two major limitations from which the exclusive *Ghadr* conspiracy in India suffered were that it lacked in leadership capable of unifying the small bands of conspirators acting under minor leaders (such as Nidhon Singh or Mula Singh or Nawab Khan) into an organised revolutionary party, and, secondly, it lacked in arms and ammunition. These *Ghadr* men hardly knew the technique of bomb manufacture and the revolvers in their possession were also too inadequate for the purpose.

#### PINGLEY IN PUNJAB

A natural result of these abortive attempts was a temporary lull in the *Ghadr* activities. For a time



they seemed to be groping in the dark, knowing not which way to move. At this psychological moment the despatch of Pingley by Rash Behari to the Punjab appeared as a veritable god-send. Pingley met Amar Singh, Nidhon Singh, Kartar Singh, Parmanand and Ram Saran Das in Kapurthala and held out to them the possibility of co-operation of the Bengal revolutionaries with their cause. Shortly after this an important meeting was held at the Virpali Dharmasala, Amritsar (December 31, 1914) and attended by Kartar Singh, Parmanand, Harnam Singh I, Pingley, Nidhon Singh, Balwant Singh, Mula Singh and others. From judicial records we learn that at this meeting "the revolution was discussed, the looting of treasuries again mooted, the contribution of money considered, the seduction of troops, the collection of arms, the preparation of bombs, and the commission of dacoities brought into prominence." "Part of the gathering," the judicial records state further, "adjourned to Sant Gulab Singh's Dharmasala, where an experimental bomb was made and tried with success, and the proposal originally made by Pingley to bring up a Bengali expert adopted."<sup>36</sup>

Sachindra Nath Sanyal also met a number of *Ghadr* revolutionaries in the Punjab and discussed with them the prospects of bomb-making under the direction of a Bengali leader, viz., Rash Behari Bose. Not merely a resolution to the effect was adopted at the Amritsar meeting, but some positive steps in that direction were also taken. Mula Singh, the local leader of Amritsar, offered to Sachindra Nath Rupees Five Hundred (January 12, 1915) as travel expenses of Rash Behari and his party from Benares, and a house was also secured from Mussamat Atri in Amritsar for

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36. The Judgment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case as delivered by A. A. Irvine, President, and T. P. Ellis and Sheo Narain, Special Commissioners, on September 13, 1915.

the purpose. Emissaries were also sent to Lahore and Jhabawal for the collection of materials for bomb manufacture.<sup>37</sup>

On the return of Pingley and Sachindra Nath Sanyal to Benares a fruitful meeting was held in Rash Behari's house on the Harish Chandra Ghat Road about the middle of January, 1915. At this meeting Rash Behari exhorted his followers to get ready for the February rising and declared before them that "a rebellion was to take place all over the country and that the time had come when they must prepare to die for their country".<sup>38</sup> Rash Behari chalked out a plan of work at that meeting and announced that Damodar Swarup would be the leader at Allahabad, Bibhuti and Preo Nath would go to the Benares lines to seduce the troops, and Nalini Mukherjee would go to Jabbalpore for the same purpose. Narendra Nath Banerjee and Preo Nath Bhattacharya were to bring arms from Bengal while Vinayak Rao Kaple and Hem Chandra Datta would convey them to the Punjab. From the Punjab, it was also arranged, Vinayak would come to Cawnpore to assume the local charge of the affairs, Pingley would see the Indian troops everywhere, and the Punjabi revolutionaries would be working at Ferozepore. Kalipada Mukherjee and Ananda Charan Bhattacharya were to be kept as reserves in Benares. Rash Behari explained further at the meeting "how to blow up bridges, how to cut telegraph wires, how to destroy railway lines, and how to loot treasuries and banks". Besides, Rash Behari informed his comrades that he himself was going to the Punjab with Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Pingley to organize the revolution, of which the exact date would be later announced after his consultation with the *Ghadr* men. This meeting

37. *Ibid.*

38. The Judgment in the Benares Conspiracy Case as reported in the *Statesman* on February 15, 1916.

at Rash Behari's house was attended by Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Damodar Swarup Seth, V. G. Pingley, Narendra Nath Banerjee, Vinayak Rao Kaple, Jamna Das and Bibhuti Bhushan Haldar.

#### RASH BEHARI AND THE BENGAL REVOLUTIONARIES

After Rash Behari had assumed the supreme command of the Benares affairs (1914), the Anusilan Samiti of Dacca and the Chandernagore centre of Moti Lal Roy began to work in close unison with the Benares group of revolutionaries. In this connection Sachindra Nath Sanyal has stated in his *Bandi-Jiban* (Vol. I) that since the historic amalgamation of 1913 the revolutionaries all over north India from the Punjab, Delhi and Benares to Chandernagore and Dacca had been for all practical purposes united for effecting a revolutionary upsurge in India with the help of the British Indian army. The other political parties of Bengal were completely unaware of this momentous development.

That Rash Behari was bent upon organizing an armed revolution by exploiting the internal forces without waiting for the arrival of German arms is clearly reflected in his conversation with Kedareswar Guha of the Anusilan Samiti. Kedareswar Guha, sent to Germany by Naren Sen in 1912 with the object of securing German help on behalf of Indian revolutionaries, returned to Calcutta from America (October, 1914) carrying definite information from Dhiren Sarkar, his class-mate in the Bengal National College, Calcutta, of the formation of the Berlin-India Committee and the readiness of the German Government to send arms to India. Kedareswar met Rash Behari in Benares with a letter of introduction from Anukul Chakravarty (alias Thakur), then the leader of the Anusilan Samiti. On learning the message of Kedareswar Guha on a boat over the Ganges after dusk, Rash Behari plainly

informed him that in spite of the assurance of the German Government to send arms to India to strengthen the hands of Indian revolutionaries, he was not going to put off his plan in expectation of this uncertain element, but would follow up his own course of action.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, emissaries had always been sent from Benares to Chandernagore carrying Rash Behari's instructions to his followers during the armed rising that was coming ahead. Before Rash Behari left for the Punjab, he had called Anukul Chakravarty and Nagen Datta (alias Girija Babu) to Benares, who met him in his house on the Harish Chandra Ghat Road and found Pingley and Kartar Singh also present there. Rash Behari asked Anukul to arrange for simultaneous bomb outrages all over Bengal and to seduce the Benares regiment then posted at Dacca. On their return Girija Babu remained at Calcutta to look after Calcutta affairs while Anukul Chakravarty moved towards Dacca to carry through the task assigned to him.<sup>40</sup> Information was also sent from Calcutta to the districts of Malda, Coochbihar, Dinajpur, Rajsahi etc. to get ready for the eventual attack on the police lines and the treasuries on the appointed day.<sup>41</sup> After the Mussalmanpara bomb outrage, Prafulla Kumar Biswas went to Patna, trying there to create incitement in the Danapur Cantonment.

It has to be noted also that in response to Rash Behari's invitation Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee along with Narendra Nath Bhattacharya (alias M. N. Roy)

39. Kedareswar Guha's statement incorporated in *Banglay Biplab-bad* by Nalini Kishore Guha (Calcutta, 1954), pp. 138-143.

40. Sri Anukul Chakravarty has informed the writer that he met two Rajput soldiers, Bhup Singh and Kartar Singh, of the Benares regiment on the Dacca-bound steamer and had talk with them. At Dacca he tried to seduce them, and he gave Rs. 300/- to Kartar Singh. But after sometime that regiment was transferred from Benares.

41. *Agnidiner Katha* by Satis Pakrasi (1947) pp. 46-47. Sri Nalini Kanta Ghose has informed the present writer that he was then in charge of the Rajsahi district and that it was he who gave orders to blow off the Police Training College at Sardah, Rajsahi, in the February Revolt of 1915.

and Atul Krishna Ghose travelled to Benares to meet him. Rash Behari not merely disclosed his plan to Jyotindra Nath, but also asked him to take the command of Bengal<sup>42</sup>, and himself went to Amritsar to assume the direction of affairs there with Mula Singh as his right-hand man.

#### ATTEMPTED REVOLUTION BY RASH BEHARI

By the middle of January, 1915 Rash Behari arrived in Amritsar and put up at Mussamat Atri's house in Chauk Baba Atal, maintaining strict secrecy and receiving revolutionary workers at the Sant Gulab Singh's Dharmasala. No sooner had he come to Amritsar than he plunged himself into the preparatory work including bomb manufacture and employed Amar Singh and Ram Saran Das as his assistants. He also sent emissaries to Benares who "returned bringing a biscuit tin with bombs in it". Besides, a bomb factory was set up at Jhabewal, which was afterwards transferred to Lohatbadi. At this stage several political dacoities were committed at Jhanir, Rabhon, Sahnewal and Mansuran, and as a sequel of the Chabba dacoity (February 2-3, 1915) in which the dacoits had to encounter police resistance, Rash Behari at once shifted his headquarters from Amritsar to Lahore on February 2, 1915. At Lahore Rash Behari's major pre-occupation was to devise ways and means for the seduction of troops, and to send emissaries to Jullundhar, Bannu, Kohat, Rawalpindi, Peshwar, Jhelum, Kapurthala, Ferozepore, Meerut, Ambala etc. in order to influence both the infantry and the cavalry men. After having obtained the information of their ready response Rash Behari announced on February 12 that the general rising from Peshwar to Bengal would take place on February 21 and a tri-coloured flag

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42. Atul Krishna Ghose's statement as incorporated in *Banglay Biplab-bad*, p. 320.

—yellow (Sikh), red (Hindu) and blue (Muslim)—would be hoisted on that date. Intimation was sent to different cantonments and every possible arrangement was perfected for the armed rising. As the *Sedition Committee Report* of 1918 puts it: Rash Behari went to Lahore and “sent out emissaries to various cantonments in Upper India to procure military aid for the appointed day. He also tried to organize the collection of gangs of villagers to take part in the rebellion. Bombs were prepared; arms were got together; flags were made ready; a declaration of war was drawn up; instruments were collected for destroying railways and telegraph wires. In the meantime, however, in order to raise funds for the financing of the enterprise, some Punjab revolutionaries had committed various dacoities”.<sup>43</sup> It was also arranged that an outbreak in Mian Mir would serve as the signal, and it appears that simultaneous risings were designed at Lahore, Ferozepore and Rawalpindi, spreading to Jabbalpore, Benares and other places in quick succession. The *Sedition Committee Report* further states that “at least two or three revolutionaries in Eastern Bengal were on the 8th of February aware of what was in contemplation, and were arranging for a rising at Dacca if the Sikh revolt materialised.” But unfortunately, the rising did not take place, as the signal for the outbreak was never struck due to the treachery of a man, Kripal Singh, who allowed himself to be used as a spy by the police. His suspicious movements near the Lahore station on February 15 at a time when he was expected to be in Mian Mir to convey Rash

43. It is to be noted that the said declaration of war was entitled ‘Yuddha Ghosana’ written in Hindi. It was drafted under Rash Behari’s instructions by one of his followers, and after its correction by Rash Behari, hundreds of copies of the same were made on the duplicator. As to the flags referred to above, Sir Michael O’Dwyer writes in his *India As I Knew It* that four rebel flags were captured by the police raid on Lahore on February 19, 1915, one of which Sir Michael claimed and held as a souvenir (p. 202).

Behari's message to the troops, caused serious misgivings in the mind of some revolutionaries who happened to see him. Gifted with a rare sense of realism and insight Rash Behari at once changed the date for the contemplated rising from February 21 to February 19, and hurriedly took all necessary steps in that direction. But, again, the whole programme fell through as the police in liaison with Kripal Singh succeeded in raiding the Mochi Gate House of Rash Behari at Lahore on the 19th and putting several persons under arrest. Thus the whole conspiracy collapsed, but Rash Behari and Pingley managed to escape to Benares.<sup>44</sup>

*The Sedition Committee Report* evaluates the whole thing in the following words:

"The success attained was extremely small, but the seed sown must have caused some tragedies had not the plan for a concerted rising on the 21st of February been nipped in the bud" (p. 110).

#### FAILURE OF THE PINGLEY MISSION AT MEERUT

On his return to Benares along with Vinayak Rao Kaple, Rash Behari's major concern was how to save

44. It is interesting to read what the Judgment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case said about the collapse of the movement: "On the 15th February, when there was a large meeting in Lahore he (Kripal Singh) had wired to Liaquat Hyat Khan to come up from Amritsar to arrest the gathering. The wire was delayed and the police arriving late at Lahore were met by Kripal Singh at the station and he told them it was too late". Meanwhile his secret manipulation was seen through and the contemplated rising was ante-dated the 19th. Then the Judgment continued:

"Kripal Singh found this out on his return from Dadhir and told the Amritsar police who were in Lahore waiting for a raid on the morning of the 19th.

"He remained in the Mochi Gate house throughout the 19th waiting for the leaders to assemble before giving a signal to the Police, but by the afternoon, though the principal leaders had not collected having reason to believe those present intended to murder him he gave a pre-arranged signal to the police. The house was raided, some of the revolutionists captured and the centre of organization was broken. Rash Behari Bose appears to have fled, others of the revolutionists disappeared, others from time to time have been arrested."

his Benares' colleagues from the clutches of the police. Sachindra Nath Sanyal has stated in this connection that while the Government employed all their resources to bind down Rash Behari Bose, the latter too devoted his whole energies to keep his Benares party intact. With this great task ahead, Rash Behari had to spend more than a month at Benares, safely eluding the grasp of the police who was pursuing him like a bull dog.<sup>45</sup>

While Rash Behari was staying at Benares, Pingley came from Meerut after having felt the pulse of the troops there. Meerut was a familiar place for Pingley where he had worked in the early part of February among the 128th Pioneers and the 12th Cavalry, in company with Kartar Singh and Sucha Singh. Rash Behari was no longer in favour of 'inciting' the army, but on Pingley's insistence to have a second chance among the Meerut troops he had to concede even against his will.

About March 20, 1915 Pingley returned to Benares with Nadir Khan, an Afghan Jamadar of the 12th Cavalry, and brought to Meerut ten live bombs concealed in a steel trunk. Mr. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence of the Government of India, writes in his *Note* on Meerut Bomb Affair that the Afghan who accompanied Pingley to Benares was taken to a house blindfolded in the dark and was introduced to a Bengali leader who, on cross-examining him and on being satisfied that he was a genuine mutineer with large following behind, "ordered that the bombs should be given and also told him various things about the plans of the revolutionaries. Among other things he said that he had made 300 bombs for the 12th Cavalry... He also explained to the sower the method of using the phosphorus solution to make slow fuses for the bombs".<sup>46</sup>

45. Sachindra Nath Sanyal's *Bandi-Jiban* (Vol. II, 1925).

46. The *Note* of Mr. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence.



According to Mr. Cleveland, this Bengali leader was no other than Rash Behari Bose himself. But as ill luck would have it, the Meerut scheme again fell through due to the treachery of the Afghan Jamadar who had accompanied Pingley to Benares. On the night of March 23 the Officer commanding the 12th Cavalry on being previously informed, suddenly raided one of the sower's quarters in his lines where he found Pingley displaying 10 picric acid bombs, 10 glass phials and a written formula for bomb making. Pingley was at once put under arrest and subsequently hanged on a charge of treason. Colonel Muspratt Williams, the Chief Inspector of Explosives to the Government of India, described these bombs as of the Delhi pattern and "of a highly dangerous character".<sup>47</sup> In Mr. Cleveland's view the "Meerut programme was a mere item in the big scheme of the combined Ghadr and Bengali party". He further states: "I believe that at the present moment the Ghadr party in the Punjab is disorganised and beaten. The revolutionary party in Bengal is on the other hand well-organised and flushed by success. Rash Behari who has been so active in behaving towards the Punjabis as the Germans have done towards the Turks has hitherto brought upon his dupes far more trouble than success and has also risked a disclosure of a part of the Bengali organisation in his efforts to amalgamate it with the Punjab schemes. Judging however from our experience of Rash Behari in the past it is probable that he may be quite undiscouraged by the failures and risks incurred and will forthwith seek out new centres and fresh partisans". Mr. Cleveland whose animosity to the

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Delhi, dated 25.3.1915. Also see the Judgment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

47. It has been learnt by the present writer from Sri Manindra Nath Naik of Chandernagore that the ten Meerut bombs were manufactured at Chandernagore and thence brought to Benares by Manmatha Nath Biswas.

revolutionaries was so pronounced, was however shrewd enough to observe the distinction that was noticeable at that time between the Punjabi and the Bengali revolutionaries. According to him, the Bengali revolutionaries were made up of sterner stuff. "The Sikhs and Mahomedans of the Ghadr party", he observed, "are so prone to be ostentatious and to make statements when arrested that their Bengali allies will possibly feel nervous before long of trusting them very far. A most urgent requirement is the discovery and destruction of the nest at Benares".<sup>48</sup>

#### RASH BEHARI'S RETHINKING ON THE INDIAN SITUATION

The tragic end the attempted rising met with successively at Lahore and Meerut carried important lessons for Rash Behari who now became convinced of the futility of the method he had hitherto pursued for an armed Indian rising with the help of the Indian army serving under the British. The supreme importance of foreign assistance, both military and financial, forced itself upon his mind at this stage. He began to think of undertaking a tour abroad for his mission. Once, in the year 1914, after the warrant for his arrest had been issued, Srish Chandra Ghose and other Chandernagore friends of Rash Behari urged him to flee from India to escape arrest, and even a ticket for that purpose was purchased. But as Rash Behari felt that his work in India had not yet been done, he tore the ticket into pieces. This time, however, graver circumstances counselled him to flee from the country. Rash Behari himself has narrated in his *Atmakatha* (Autobiographical Sketch) the great truth that the revolutionary parties in India were not lacking either in man-power or in "disciplined organisa-

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48. Mr. Cleveland's second and third *Notes* on Meerut Bomb Affair, dated 31.2.1915 and 14.4.1915.

tion", but sadly lacking in arms and ammunitions on account of which they had to tread the dangerous path of contacting the British Indian army. Had there been sufficient arms in the hands of the revolutionaries, so argued Rash Behari, a revolution could have been effected in India by the civilians alone, notwithstanding the arrest of a few persons here and there. Hence he decided that the country should first be honey-combed with "small arms" before a second attempt could be successfully undertaken. Another factor that handicapped the revolutionaries was, in Rash Behari's view, the lack of funds. Money secured by means of political dacoities or received as gifts from a few monied men was found to be too inadequate for big work. He now clearly perceived, as Cavour did a century ago in Italy, that a subject people could not secure their independence without international assistance.<sup>49</sup>

#### RASH BEHARI'S FLIGHT FROM INDIA

The news of the arrest of Pingley at Meerut (March 23, 1915) and of Srish Chandra Ghose at Howrah (about this time) dealt a severe blow to Rash Behari's mind. The shock seemed unbearable for a time, and profoundly disturbed in mind, he left for Chandernagore along with Nalini Mohan Mukherjee. From his house at Tripurabhairavi Brahmapuri in Benares Rash Behari and Nalini Mohan started for Bengal. They were received by Jyotish Sinha (alias Pasupati) at the Mogra station who escorted them to Chandernagore. Rash Behari passed a few days in that French colony in absolute secrecy and firmly decided in consultation with Moti Lal Roy to leave for Japan. It was further decided that he would travel in the name of P. N. Tagore, posing as a relative of

49. *Rash Behari Atmakatha* as published in the *Prabodh* monthly for *Jaistha*, 1331 B.S.

Rabindra Nath Tagore whose journey to Japan was scheduled for the near future, in order to create a general impression in interested circles that P. N. Tagore was preceding Rabindra Nath only to make necessary arrangements for the poet's reception in that foreign land. During this period of his Chandernagore stay, Rash Behari lived in the house of Sagar Kali Ghose like a "Bhattachaj Brahmin" with a big sacred thread on and a long *tikki*. Meanwhile, while his preparations for Japan tour were under progress, he spent the interim period of over a month at Nabadwip along with a Marathi young man. Anukul Chakravarty (alias Thakur) who was then at Nabadwip was sent by Rash Behari to Dacca for securing money. With money from Anukul Chakravarty Girija Babu soon came to Nabadwip after which Rash Behari, in consultation with Girija Babu, Sachin Sanyal and Pasupati, decided to go to Calcutta via Chandernagore.<sup>50</sup> A few days before his steamship *Sanuki Maru* would leave the Calcutta port, Rash Behari reached Calcutta and a ticket was purchased for him. He met some of his associates, viz., Sachindra, Damodar, Bibhuti, Pasupati etc., in a room on the second floor above the Dharmatala post-office, exhorting them to vigorously continue the organizational work under the guidance of Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Girija Babu during his absence.<sup>51</sup> On May 12, 1915 Rash Behari departed from India. He reached Japan on June 5 and after some initial difficulties settled down to work for the supreme cause of India's liberation.

50. Sri Anukul Chandra Chakravarty, aged 77, has communicated to the writer on 8.7.1966 that he sent money from Dacca to Rash Behari Bose at Nabadwip through Girija Babu, but he does not remember whether he met Rash Behari at Nabadwip. So far as he can recollect, he had left Nabadwip before Rash Behari went to that place.

51. The Judgment in the Benares Conspiracy Case. Also see *Rash Behari Atmakatha* in the *Asar*, 1331 B.S. issue of the monthly *Prabartak*.

## MIRACULOUS ESCAPES OF RASH BEHARI

The political career of Rash Behari was full of perils and adventures. He found himself repeatedly in the thick of apparently insurmountable difficulties but thanks to God's blessings he tided over them in no time. All the resources of the British bureaucracy were pressed to bind him down under the iron rigours of law but they came to naught in the long run. His escapes from peril seem to be a riddle to ordinary human intelligence. He could see things so clearly and fully as to foresee the future. He was endowed with a rare anticipating vision which was mainly responsible for his miraculous escapes from imminent danger through life. All other Indian revolutionaries had to face at least once or twice the miseries of imprisonment at the hands of the British, but Rash Behari stood out as a clear exception to the general rule. He had an unswerving faith in God and believed in the Gita doctrine of *Nishkama Karma* or selfless work. His idealism was superb and was never allowed to be tainted by petty considerations of self or ego. He dedicated himself wholly and unreservedly to the divine mission of the country's liberation and he was saved from uttermost difficult situations which repeatedly threatened to overpower him as if under the guidance of the Providence Himself.

It is most amusing to note that in February, 1914 when police searches at Delhi had been vigorously set on foot, leading to the arrests of Amir Chand and Abad Bihari as well as to the discovery of Rash Behari's some belongings, Rash Behari was spending his days in a carefree manner at Lahore without the slightest knowledge of the swift developments at Delhi. But when he came to learn of Dina Nath's arrest at Lahore from a student of the D. A. V. College Boarding in the evening, Rash Behari in his clear-sighted vision anticipated the

coming things and left the place that very night, thus frustrating the very object of the police swoop at his residence at the following day-break.

Rash Behari arrived at Delhi from Lahore for safety but being informed on the way by Amir Chand's servant of the arrest of his master, he at once left bag and baggage for Chandernagore thus eluding again the grasp of the police.<sup>52</sup>

Information gradually reached the Bengal police that Rash Behari had been hiding in his own house at Chandernagore. They laid a trap to catch their prey by making a surprise swoop at his residence on March 8, 1914 but were befooled again by the man who ward off the danger by concealment. The failure of the police search led the authorities to believe that their prey had already left Chandernagore for Upper India. The Punjab police therefore issued a circular dated March 9, 1914 against Rash Behari Bose, announcing a reward of Rs. 5,000/- for the capture of Rash Behari or any useful information relating to him. A vivid description of Rash Behari's physical features and movements were provided in the circular which reads in part as follows:

"Fairly tall; stoutish; large eyes; moustache recently shaved; third finger of one hand stiff and scarred as result of accident; aged about 30. Dresses sometimes as Punjabi and sometimes as Bengali. May probably be wandering about in the guise of a Sannyasi. Frequent Rawalpindi, Multan, Ambala, Simla, Amritsar, Gurudaspur, Ferozepur, Jhelum and Lahore. Bengali *Kalibaris* and Colonies and Hindu Shiwalas, & c., should be carefully scrutinised, as well as all Sarais and Railway Stations".<sup>53</sup> Intimation was also transmitted to all the steamer companies of India to co-operate with

52. Sachindra Nath Sanyal's *Bandi-Jiban* (Vol. II).

53. Vide File No. 430/14 of the I. B. Records of the Government of West Bengal.

the Government with regard to a man of the above description, and his photos were widely circulated at all railway stations. But in spite of this vigorous hunt about by the police, Rash Behari reached Benares safe and sound in April, 1914 and settled down to work for his political objects even in concealment. It appeared surprising to the judges of the Benares Conspiracy Case that Rash Behari could safely stay in Benares for about the whole of 1914 without the police being aware in the least of his presence there.

A shrewd observer of men and matters, Rash Behari could assume the role of any person in his natural setting. He was thus an adept in assuming pseudonyms in pseudo-dresses.<sup>54</sup> In the *milieu* of the Lahore conspiracy he was known to his colleagues in the Punjab in various names such as *Fat Bengali*, *Satindar Chandar*, *Chuchandra Nath Dutt* and *Satis Chandar* and never disclosed his real name to them. Rash Behari could speak Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English fluently.

After the Lahore Conspiracy had fallen through (February 19, 1915), Rash Behari spent a few days at Lahore, then in the grip of the civil and military authorities, without allowing himself to be detected by his enemies. He decided to proceed towards Kabul in the guise of a Mahomedan and even began reading *Kalmas* with Maulvis. But suddenly in an intuitive flash he foresaw the coming dangers and set out for Benares without delay in the dress of a heavily-turbaned Punjabi. His house at Lahore was searched the next day of his flight from that place.

At Benares, Rash Behari developed a new tactics of assuming the role of a woman as a measure of protection against his enemies. Sri Bisweswar Goswami,

54. This qualification was an acquisition of Rash Behari even from his early youth at Simla where he associated himself with many theatrical organizations, and once he amazed the audience while playing in the role of Lawrence Foster in *Chandrasekhar*.

a junior colleague of Rash Behari at Benares, has informed the present writer that at least on two occasions,—once in the house of Bibhuti Bhushan Haldar and then in the present house of Bisweswar Goswami,—Rash Behari easily broke through heavy police cordon placed at those houses, putting on woman's dress.<sup>55</sup>

Rash Behari in the role of a Bhattachaj Brahmin at Chandernagore was such a natural performance as to attract even a police spy, out in the pursuit of Rash Behari, to offer *pranam*s to him by stretching his body on the floor, without being able to know the real man.

On the eve of his travel to Japan, Rash Behari, dressed as P. N. Tagore, went to the Police Commissioner at Calcutta to receive his identity card.<sup>56</sup> For him at first a second-class ticket was purchased. But at the last moment Rash Behari changed his ticket for first-class on account of which, as he himself narrated in his *Atmakatha*, he could avoid search at numerous points, and even at Hongkong where any Indian intending to leave that port was required to have a permit from the Police Superintendent, he managed to secure a permit for himself in the name of Preo Nath Tagore.<sup>57</sup>

#### THE EARLY YEARS OF RASH BEHARI IN JAPAN

The failure of the *Maverick* and *Henry S* plot (March-July, 1915) to smuggle big cargo of arms into India to help the Indian revolutionaries had in the meantime convinced the German Consulates in the Far East of the enormous risks involved in the large shipment of arms to India. But the idea of smuggling

55. The letter of Sri Bisweswar Goswami of D/30/65 Debnathpura, Benares, dated 21.6.66. The present writer had an interview with him to the same effect at Benares in October 1966. Sri Somendra Nath Roy of Santiniketan has also informed the present writer that Rash Behari employed the same tactics in Japan too during his underground life there (1915-23).

56. This bit of information was supplied to Sri Somendra Nath Roy in Japan by Rash Behari himself.

57. *Rash Behari's Atmakatha* in the monthly *Prabartak* for *Agrahayan*, 1331 B.S.



small stocks of arms through overland routes—through Siam and Burma,—was not ruled out altogether. A major pre-occupation of Rash Behari in Japan was to keep constant contact with the German Consulate at Shanghai which favoured the smuggling of small stocks of arms to India with the help of some German agents. One A. Neilson was very active in this matter. He used to collect arms and purchase chemicals for making explosives, and four houses occupied by Neilson in Shanghai were traced by the Municipal Police, Shanghai, at 108 Chaotung Road in the International Settlement, 32 Yangtsepoo Road, another in Siccawei Road and a fourth one in Autung Road, Chapei District and were found to have contained arms and explosives.<sup>58</sup>

In Japan Rash Behari came into contact with Bhagwan Singh, a seasoned revolutionary, and went to Shanghai to devise ways and means to smuggle arms to India. In Shanghai he put up at Neilson's Yangtsepoo Road house<sup>59</sup> and in liaison with Neilson engaged two Chinese to carry arms to Bengal and hand them over to Amarendra Nath Chatterjee. The Intelligence Branch Records of the Government of West Bengal show that on October 16 1915 the Shanghai Municipal Police happened to arrest two Chinese suspects and "found in their possession 129 pistols and 12,000 rounds of ammunition, which the suspects declared had been made over to them by a local German firm to be packed and sent to Calcutta". It is further revealed by the same source that the said persons were to deliver the smuggled goods to two persons in Calcutta viz., Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of the "Sramajibi Samabaya" and Manmohon Bhattacharya of the Hindusthan

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58. Letters by J. W. Seigne, Captain, R. M. L. I. to the Commander-in-Chief, H. M. Ships and Vessels, China, dated Shanghai, March 6 and March 16, 1916.

59. Home Political Proceedings of the Government of India, Nov. 1916; No. 44 Deposit, for the statement of Abani Nath Mukherjee.

Co-operative Bank.<sup>60</sup> This fact is also referred to by the *Sedition Committee Report* (p. 85) which mentions that the two Chinese in possession of 129 automatic pistols and 20,830 rounds of ammunition "concealed in the centre of bundles of planks" were arrested at Shanghai in October, 1915. Besides, Rash Behari arranged for the despatch of a messenger to India to communicate closely guarded secrets to his friends and colleagues. Abani Nath Mukherjee who had then been living in Japan was selected by Bhagwan Singh for the mission and was sent to Rash Behari at Shanghai. Abani Nath was fully instructed by Rash Behari as to his assigned role in India, and was also supplied with a list of names which were noted down in his diary, but unfortunately, in course of his Indiadward journey he was arrested at Singapore in September, 1915. Besides, Rash Behari, introduced to the German Consul at Shanghai as the "Chief Indian Revolutionary leader", also arranged with his help the despatch of two ship-loads of arms to India which were confiscated before they reached their destination.<sup>61</sup>

On his return from Shanghai an important work of Rash Behari was the organization of a meeting in a Tokyo hotel at Ueno Park (November 27, 1915) in collaboration with Heramba Lal Gupta, Lala Lajpat Rai and Dr. Syumei Ohkawa (a bitter critic of the British Administration in India) and attended by many Japanese gentlemen. On that occasion the Japanese national flag was unfurled and their national anthem sung. The fiery speeches delivered at the meeting, particularly by Lajpat Rai condemning the British policy in India, enraged the British ambassador in Japan so much as to bring British pressure on the

60. The letter of Mr. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Delhi, to the Police Commissioner, Bengal, dated Sumla, the 21st October, 1915.

61. Rash Behari's written statement entitled "Our Struggle".

Japanese Government then bound as allies by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-21). Under pressure from Britain, an Extradition Warrant against Rash Behari Bose was soon issued by the Government of Japan. As soon as the news reached his ears, he went into concealment in a baker's workshop in Tokyo with the help of the old Samurai leader Mr. M. Toyama. The baker referred to was no other than Mr. Aizo Soma who later gave his daughter in marriage to Rash Behari mainly for political reasons. Although the Extradition Warrant was withdrawn after about four months (April, 1916), yet Rash Behari remained hemmed in with dangers from the British Embassy in Japan, necessitating his change of residence as many as seventeen times during the eight years following (1916-23). At every turn he stood in danger of either being kidnapped or killed by the British agency.<sup>62</sup> So, he had to maintain strictest secrecy about his whereabouts during this period. But then it was not a period of his complete isolation from the current of world politics. Even during this period of concealment his plotting activities continued. Mr. D. Petrie who was deputed in 1916 as Intelligence Officer of the Government of India in the Far East, wrote a very interesting and important Report on the Indian revolutionary activities in the Far East in 1917. Regarding Rash Behari Bose, the Petrie Report says :

"Indeed, the only person of real importance who appears to be left is Rash Behari Bose *alias* P. N. Thakur, who, however, is living under aegis of the Japanese Government, and who, by reason of the secrecy maintained as to his existence and the restrictions imposed upon his freedom of movement, may be almost regarded as no longer borne on the 'active list'. It is not, of course, implied that Bose is inactive, but

62. J. G. Ohsawa's *The Two Great Indians In Japan* (Calcutta, 1954) pp. 10-18.

the conditions imposed by his very method of existence are bound to detract greatly from his usefulness to the party". The Report then continues: "Towards the latter part of July Bose disappeared completely from Tokyo, where his place of refuge had become known to the British authorities. Almost at the close of December 1917 Mr. Davidson, His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Yokohama was able, after an exhaustive and most skilfully conducted inquiry, to rediscover him at Okitsu, a village in the vicinity of Katsura, a town on the East coast. Bose, after his discovery, almost immediately left for Tokyo, where he is believed to be concealed in the compound of the house of the Lord High Chamberlain to the Emperor, although it is possible that it is merely some retainer of this high official who is harbouring Bose without his master's knowledge". Rash Behari adopted the pseudo name of Hayashi Ichiro at that time.

About Rash Behari Bose's underground activities in Japan the Petrie Report goes on to state further:

"Intercepted letters to Bose show conclusively that he is still in close touch with the heads of the conspiracy in America such as Narendra Bhattacharji and Ram Chand and that he is still devoting himself to revolutionary work, so far as the disabilities imposed by his position will permit". It is further revealed that Rash Behari was also in touch with Mr. Tarak Nath Das while the latter was in Japan for four months in 1917. Tarak Nath Das looked up to Rash Behari, in the words of Mr. Petrie, "as some one greater than himself". Both are said "to have evolved a scheme for the sinking of ships by means of explosives to be placed on board". But the scheme did not proceed far beyond the discussion stage.<sup>63</sup> The seizure by the police of a holograph writing from Rash Behari Bose

63. The Report of Mr. D. Petrie, dated Shanghai, January 10, 1918.

in course of the searches of Tarak Nath Das's room at 44, Portola Street, Newyork, in connection with the famous San Francisco Trial of 1917-18, offers another proof of the closeness of intimacy between these two Indian revolutionaries. Dr. Chandra Kanta Chakravarty, a leader of the Indo-German conspiracy, has informed the present writer that he too received letters from Rash Behari Bose during his stay in America in this period.

It needs he noted that the period of factual concealment for Rash Behari did not terminate until the year 1923 when he came to acquire Japanese citizenship. Being happy over this priceless acquisition, Rash Behari wrote the following from Japan to Srish Chandra Ghose: "You will perhaps be glad to know that I have got myself naturalised here. This will enable me to travel in any part of the world except the British possessions". From that time he appeared on the public scene in the politics of Japan and began to work and organize with his new base at Tokyo the forces for the liberation of his mother-country from British thralldom.<sup>64</sup>

In Japan Rash Behari soon qualified himself as a distinguished Japanese citizen. By associating himself with many universities and academies, by writing books and delivering speeches in Japanese, by introducing features of Indian life and culture, he strengthened and fostered the ancient bond that had existed between India and Japan. He identified himself with the life of the Japanese so completely as to draw admiration even from men of great cultural standing. Mr. Kawabata-ko, a famous collector of Japanese painting, once advised Sri Binode Behari

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64. The pursuit of Rash Behari by the British agents did not end even after 1923. At least two more attempts were made by them to kidnap him (1926 and 1932-33) which were frustrated through the efforts of Mr. Toyama and his friends.

Mukherjee, the renowned artist of Santiniketan who had been to Japan in 1937, to meet Mr. Bose if he wanted to learn Japanese etiquette. Very few Japanese stood on a par with him in this respect, said the Japanese gentleman.<sup>65</sup> Thus Rash Behari was outwardly a full-fledged Japanese, but at heart he was a true son of Mother India whose political liberation was his supreme objective. At Tokyo he erected a tablet in the pine bush of his house wherein were inscribed the names of those of his colleagues in India who had laid their lives in the cause of the country. Rash Behari used to sit and meditate near this tablet in his leisurely hours. Sri Somendra Nath Roy of Basic Teachers' Training, Santiniketan, who spent three years in Japan (1934-1937) to learn collotype photography and lived in *Asia Lodge*, a boarding house founded by Rash Behari in or about 1934 for Asian students, still possesses a number of photos of Rash Behari sitting beside the above-mentioned tablet.

#### THE I. I. L. AND THE I. N. A.

A born fighter and grim revolutionary, Rash Behari did not aspire after peace or rest even in his life of exile in a foreign land. The liberation of the country from alien thralldom was the first passion with him to which everything else, even life itself, was subordinate. Driven by this consuming passion he set himself before long to the organization of the kindred spirits in South-East Asia and founded the Indian Independence League (1924) having Tokyo as its headquarters with branches spread out in neighbouring lands in order to promote the cause of Indian independence. For over long seventeen years he ceaselessly

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65. Binode Behari Mukherjee, before he set out for Japan, was advised by Rabindra Nath Tagore to seek help from Rash Behari Bose in his difficulties and to show respects to him in the same way as he did to the poet.

toiled through I. I. L. explaining the political condition of India before East Asians and emphasising the supreme importance of Indian independence as a factor of Greater Asian freedom and unity. His slogan of "Asia for Asians" roused the East Asians from slumber and inspired them to rise to a man for expelling Western imperialism from Asia. It is not a little due to Rash Behari Bose that they began to look upon the political emancipation of India as a stepping-stone to Greater Asian liberation from bondage, and that they became sympathisers with the Indian cause in large numbers. He also promoted Indo-Japanese co-operation, good-will and understanding on the political level, just as Rabindranath Tagore did it on the cultural front after the World War I.<sup>66</sup>

The spectacular military rise of Japan in the 'thirties and her entry into the Axis combination (1937) was a momentous development in world politics. The British imperialism all over the globe stood before a most menacing crisis from the Axis combination. In these international complications Rash Behari saw the future salvation of his motherland. In his political psychology the enemies of Britain were the friends of India, no matter what their ideology or internal administration was. Never a doctrinaire or a fashionable philanthropist, Rash Behari was a hard-headed realist and could grasp the fundamentals of politics more clearly and precisely than many of his Indian compatriots. The promotion of the interests of his motherland was his principal concern and he did never allow foamy philosophisings, or vague isms to get the upperhand in him. This explains the difference in his reaction to Japan's

<sup>66</sup>. Rabindranath by his visit to Japan in 1916, 1924 and 1929 as well as by other means tried to promote Indo-Japanese cultural co-operation on a durable basis.

undeclared war against China since July 7, 1937. Moved by humanitarian impulses many Indian leaders then began to vehemently condemn Japan for her military action against China, but Rash Behari approached the whole thing like a *real-politiker* and was very much distressed by the unpolitical anti-Japanese propaganda by Indians through press and platform, for he considered such propaganda highly inimical to the national interests of India. So he sent the following cable to Rabindra Nath Tagore: "Indian merchants, students and residents here request you to prevent Congress and Pandit Nehru's anti-Japanese activities for the sake of Indian interests and Indo-Japanese friendship". To this Rabindra Nath sent a very decent reply dated October 10, 1937, from which an extract is quoted below:

"Your cable has caused me many restless hours, for it hurt me very much to have to ignore your appeal. I wish you had asked for my co-operation in a cause against which my spirit did not protest. I know in making this appeal you counted on my great regard for the Japanese, for, I, along with the rest of Asia, did once admire and look up to Japan and did once fondly hope that in Japan Asia had at last discovered its challenge to the West, that Japan's new strength would be consecrated in safeguarding the culture of the East against alien interests. But Japan has not taken long to betray that rising hope and repudiate all that seemed significant in her wonderful, and, to us symbolic awakening, and has now become itself a worse menace to the defenceless peoples of the East".<sup>67</sup>

Rash Behari could not see eye to eye with Rabindra Nath, and himself began to work to counteract the evils of this anti-Japanese propaganda by Indians by organizing meetings in Japan and advocating Indo-Japanese

67. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, October 11, 1937.



collaboration under the auspices of I. I. L. He organized a convention of Asian youths at Sankaido in Tokyo (October 28, 1937) and raised the slogans "Asia for Asians", "Go Home White" etc.

In November, 1938 Rash Behari Bose issued a manifesto in which he called for a revision of India's foreign policy. He asked the Indian leaders to be realistic in their approach to foreign affairs *vis-a-vis* India. "For the last few years, especially after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflict", the manifesto said, "it has almost become a fashion for some of the Congress leaders to attack and condemn and abuse the Fascist countries indiscriminately. They do not know what harm they do to the cause of Indian freedom by their unwise action. The other day Pandit Nehru during the course of his tour in Europe did irretrievable damage to the cause of India by his wild utterances against the totalitarian states. His was a most unwise action and it only served to create more enemies for India". With regard to the objective of India's foreign policy, the manifesto stated: "India's foreign policy ought to be to make as many friends in the world as possible and to avoid creating enemies. Particularly they should follow the principle, 'England's enemies are our friends'. They fail to take cognisance of the fact that by creating enemies of the first class Powers in the world, they simply help the British and the prolongation of the British rule in India".<sup>68</sup>

Japan's declaration of war against the Anglo-Saxon races and her bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941 opened a new chapter in the history of Asian struggle for emancipation from Western colonialism. It set in motion forces which Rash Behari now strenuously sought to utilise to strengthen the cause of Indian Independence. To quote his own

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68. B. K. Sarkar's *The Political Philosophies Since 1905*, Vol. II, Part II, Lahore 1942, pp. 356-358.

words: "Happenings on the international chess-board during the past more than ten years have been suggesting that such a world-wide conflict was inevitable. It was also apparent that the question of Indian freedom could be successfully solved only when Japan rose in arms against British Imperialism". With reference to Japan's declaration of war in the Far East he continues: "Realising this very important fact and our duty towards our Motherland at this most important juncture, we in Tokyo promptly met on the 8th of December 1941 at the Rainbow Grill and decided upon a programme of action. My compatriots formed a committee and asked me to lead the movement and I gladly agreed to abide by their decision. We at first undertook to consolidate Indian opinion in East Asia in favour of a definite fight from without. Meetings were held in different centres of Japan and resolutions were passed emphasising the solidarity of our compatriots, the great need of declaring Independence of India by destroying British Imperialism, and expressing confidence in our work.

"On the 26th December 1941, for the first time in the history of Indians in Japan, a Conference of nearly fifty representatives of the Indian residents in Kobe, Osaka, Yokohama and Tokyo—all the four cities where Indians reside—was held at the Railway Hotel in Tokyo to consider the problems. A Resolution was passed calling upon the Indians to realise the gravity of the situation and the danger ahead of India.... Our representatives were sent to Shanghai and on 26th of January this year a huge gathering of Indian residents of Shanghai was held in Young Men's Association Hall when similar resolutions as passed in Tokyo were very enthusiastically passed and our movement was given unanimous support.

"In the meantime we established contact with the military and civil high commands in Japan and began

to impress upon them the necessity of helping India in her struggle for freedom for the very achievement of the great object for which Japan has declared war against Britain and America. We made it clear to them that so long as British Imperialism in India continues Japan cannot expect a final victory in this war. At last we succeeded in prevailing upon them, and General Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan, openly declared before the Imperial Diet that his Government was prepared to help the Indians in our efforts to free our country from the long bondage".<sup>69</sup> Among the principal collaborators of Rash Behari during this period were Swami Satyananda Puri (or Prafulla Sen) of the Anusilan Samiti and Sirdar Pritam Singh, a follower of Amar Singh, both being engaged in political work for Indian Independence with Bangkok (Siam) as their headquarters.

Encouraged by the offer of active help from the Japanese Government to Indian nationalists, Rash Behari organized two successive conferences at Tokyo and Bangkok (March and June, 1942) of representative Indians in South-East Asia and formulated a programme of action. It was at the historic Bangkok Conference that the Indian Independence League was reorganized with its base at Bangkok (later transferred to Singapore) to conduct the Indian Independence Movement from outside India and a Council of Action was formed with Rash Behari as its President. As an integral part of the I. I. L. and under the complete control of the Council of Action, the Indian National Army which had its humble beginning since December, 1941 was reformed and was to be accorded from the beginning, in terms of the Constitution at the Bangkok Conference, "the powers and status of a free National Army of an Independent India, on a footing of

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69. The Presidential Address by Rash Behari Bose at the Bangkok Conference.

equality with the armies of Japan and other friendly powers".<sup>70</sup> Thus the Indian National Army was reorganized at the Bangkok Conference and Rash Behari played a great role in its initial stages. "As I was perfectly aware of the position of Indians during and after the war", writes Rash Behari, "I had a clear understanding with the Japanese Government on this matter and it was through this process that Major Fujiwara asked for the co-operation of Indian patriots and our late beloved Sirdar Pritam Singh took a major part in the pageant of the Malaya campaign. Captain Mohon Singh joined hands with Sirdar Pritam Singh on 12th December, 1941, with a party of a few persons. Sirdar Pritam Singh being a civilian and Major Fujiwara being a Japanese Officer, did not know very much about the Indian soldiers and so the administration and command of Indian military personnel was given over to Captain Mohon Singh".<sup>71</sup>

After the Bangkok Conference Rash Behari threw himself heart and soul into the organization of the I.I.L. and I.N.A. on a firm foundation. He viewed the Indian Independence movement not as an isolated event detached from the whirlpool of world politics but as its integral part and parcel. When the Second World War broke out, particularly after its extension in the Far East in December, 1941, Rash Behari saw in the new international complications the chance of India's Freedom movement. He was never a believer in the efficacy of non-violence as a weapon in Freedom's battle nor did he ever believe that India's Freedom would come through our own strivings alone. He was shrewd enough to perceive that the future of India very largely depended on her will and power to utilise the new emerging world forces in her favour. Japan

70. *Ibid.*

71. Rash Behari's statement entitled "Our Struggle".

then in alliance with Germany and Italy was the deadliest enemy of the Anglo-American empires in the East and was determined to annihilate them by all means in the interests of Asia for Asians. In the terrible organizational strength of Japan Rash Behari found the most potent antidote to British imperialism and hence entered into an entente with the Japanese Government which had given recognition to the Council of Action of which Rash Behari was the President. But the course of affairs in the Council was not a smooth sailing for Rash Behari. After a short time a crisis threatened the very existence of the Council mainly because of the personal aggrandisement of General Mohon Singh, G.O.C., Indian National Army. Mohon Singh had risen to that position of importance as an accredited agent of the Council whose overmastering predominance over the I. N. A. was an acknowledged fact. It is regrettable that Mohon Singh in whom Rash Behari had reposed unstinted confidence was fired by personal ambition and sought to use the I. N. A. as an instrument of his personal aggrandisement. Even his allegiance to the Council of Action, the directive body of the I. N. A., became questionable. Within the Indian National Army of which he was the G. O. C. his policy became more and more despotic and high-handed and he gradually began to abrogate to himself the rights and powers which constitutionally belonged to the Council. By a secret understanding with the Japanese military officers (without having any prior consultation with the Council), he arranged for the transfer of some I. N. A. troops to Burma for military training and even sent an advance party to Rangoon for the purpose. As soon as these ambitious designs of Mohon Singh came to light (November, 1942) Rash Behari decided that the Council of Action "should immediately take control of the policy regarding the Army and all questions of major importance

should be decided by the Council and not by the G.O.C". He even wrote to Col. Iwakura to that effect to avoid misunderstanding over this matter. The crisis deepened further at this stage with the sudden resignation by all the members of the five-man Council except its President on the plea that a clear assurance of co-operation in Indian interests had not yet been obtained by Rash Behari from the Japanese Government. Thus on December 9, 1942 all powers of the Council of Action devolved on Rash Behari pending fresh election by the Committee of Representatives of the I.I.L. Four days later (December 13, 1942) Mohon Singh intimated the President in course of a letter that the I. N. A. were pledged to him and to him alone by name and that the Army under the existing circumstances could not serve their motherland through the I. I. L. in East Asia and had accordingly thought it fit to sever their connection with it. He even waited for approval of his action by the Japanese military officers who however stuck to the Bangkok resolution by recognizing the Council of Action, and not Mohon Singh, as the Supreme Body of which Rash Behari was then the only surviving member. Under these circumstances Mohon Singh was dismissed by the Council from his office as G. O. C. of the I. N. A. This firm decision taken by Rash Behari was a momentous step in the history of India's liberation movement in East Asia. He not only saved it from imminent peril but took steps rapidly to remove the misunderstanding between him and many of his colleagues that was then growing. In a declaration addressed to the Indian brothers of East Asia (December, 1942) he explained his conduct before them in these memorable words:

"I have from 9th December onward taken control of the movement; and I once again pledge to serve the cause of Indian Independence without fear and without favour, loyally and conscientiously and to the utmost

of my ability.... It would have broken my heart, if at this moment, I had let this movement die, because some of my colleagues took it into their heads, that unless on every point they had their way, they could not go on. On the other hand, I believe that if there are difficulties in the movement, they can and shall be rectified. If there are doubts and fears, they can and will be cleared. If there be even actual obstruction in our path, it is my firm conviction that it should be removed and the way made clear for achieving our object, the much longed-for and long-awaited Independence of Hindusthan. The co-operation or otherwise of any nation, however valuable it may be, is not a rock on which the ship of Indian Independence should founder. We shall fight our battles with such help, if possible, but without it if necessary.

"....I must assure every branch of the League and also the Indian National Army that, my taking over on myself the rights, duties and responsibilities of the Council of Action, need not in any manner mean changes in the constitution, organisation or development of the civil and military institutions that we have endeavoured to create, nurse and nurture during the last few months. I guarantee to them that I shall not be a party to any act that will jeopardise their interests or the interests of our Motherland. Their interests have always formed by sole objective in the work that I have undertaken on myself.

"I know I have the trust and confidence of my brothers and sisters in the arduous work ahead. If my opponents call me a puppet, let them do so. But let me assure them that they are sinning against a man whose only end and aim in life is to see his country free, absolutely free, and independent, who is as proud of his birthright as any Indian alive, and who has staked his all and who will stake the last drop of his blood in upholding the honour and integrity of Hindusthan. I

seek nothing from life except the success of our mission".<sup>72</sup>

Thus the insurmountable difficulties that confronted Rash Behari were soon tided over by him with the tact and skill of a consummate politician. By April, 1943 he not only set matters right but also could boast of a military training centre at Kuala Lumpur where about one thousand civilians were then undergoing training in the modern arts of warfare. But the severe strain which he had to bear all these weeks and months began to tell badly upon his health, and he eagerly looked forward to the day when Subhas Chandra Bose would appear in the East to assume the reins of affairs. It was through his instrumentality that an official invitation was sent to Subhas in Germany requesting his participation at the Bangkok Conference, and what is more, a resolution was also passed there urging upon the Japanese Government to take every step to make the resolution a success. The resolution read as follows :

"This Conference requests Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose to be kind enough to come to East Asia, and appeals to the Imperial Government of Japan to use its good offices to obtain the necessary permission and conveniences from the Government of Germany to enable Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose to reach East Asia safe". Needless to say, it was through a secret arrangement between Germany and Japan (then both of them bound in alliance) that Subhas Chandra Bose had a safe passage to Tokyo in June, 1943.

#### RASH BEHARI AND SUBHAS BOSE

Although a Congressite in party affiliation, Subhas Chandra Bose (later known as Netaji) was a revolutionary in his fundamental political faith. More often than

72. *The Two Great Indians In Japan*, pp. 59-65.



not he went off at a tangent to the path followed by the Congress and refused to ally himself with the compromise-seeking or moderate policy of the Congress. In 1938, he was elected President of the Indian National Congress and his influence grew by leaps and bounds. He strove hard to infuse a new spirit into the national movement and to give it a radical turn. In his approach to foreign politics he was not indiscriminate in his denunciation of the so-called Fascist countries then organized in the *Dreieck* as a powerful anti-British combination. It was mainly through his influence that at the Haripura session in February, 1938 a resolution was passed by the Congress dissociating itself from any imperialist war undertaken by Britain against Germany, Japan or Italy. Interrogated by press reporters at Lucknow in November, 1938 about the Congress policy in the event of a war, Subhas Bose as President of the Congress observed as follows: "Before we can decide our policy with regard to China in the event of the British Government and the U.S.A. joining hands to crush Japan, we shall have to consider whether by helping Great Britain, we shall save China for the Chinese people or for British imperialism".<sup>73</sup> At a time when many Congressites of importance, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were carrying on a bitter anti-Japanese propaganda against the totalitarian states as such, Subhas Bose stood for a more sober and realistic line of action or policy for the country. The veterans of the Congress looked askance at him and began to work secretly to oust him from power in the next Presidential election. Even Gandhiji threw in the weight of his voice against him. He sent Subhas Bose a wire asking him not to contest in the next election. To this Subhas Bose politely replied: "Bapuji bless me for the coming election".<sup>74</sup>

73. B. K. Sarkar's *The Political Philosophies Since 1905*, Vol. II, Part II, pp. 368-59.

The victory of Subhas Chandra Bose in the election caused a painful shock to his political opponents who were now bent upon ousting him from power. The Right-wingers of the Congress who then dominated the Working Committee began to pursue an obstructionist policy. At a meeting of the A.I.C.C. a deadlock arose over the composition of the Working Committee and Subhas had to resign from Congress Presidentship "in a spirit of extreme helplessness" (April 29, 1939). Four days later (May 3, 1939) he founded a new party within the Congress—the Forward Bloc—to give shape to his own political programme. But ere he could work out his programme through the new party, he was arrested and put into prison in connection with the Holwell Monument movement (July 2, 1940). He painfully realized that the whole country was nothing but a big prison which would afford him neither liberty nor opportunity for independent political work. A feeling of frustration seemed to overwhelm Subhas at this stage, and he saw no way out for India's deliverance from slavery so long as he remained in this country. His conversation with V.D. Savarkar at Bombay and his talk with Sri Hem Ghose in the Presidency Jail in 1940 toned up his drooping spirit and gave a definite direction to his wandering mind.

Rash Behari had all these years been watching with keen interest the political developments on the Indian scene. In the years preceding the World War II he kept up correspondence with V. D. Savarkar whom he described as one of his elderly comrades-in-arms, and under whose inspiration he founded the Japan Branch of the Hindu Mahasabha with himself as its President. Rash Behari in course of his correspondence with Savarkar kept the latter informed from time to time of the political developments in Japan and her prepara-

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74. *Desh*, Sahitya issue, 1372 for Sudhakanta Roy Choudhury's article entitled "Subhas Chandra and Rabindra Nath".

tions for future war against Anglo-American imperialism. "It may be mentioned here", wrote Sri Bal Savarkar, Private Secretary to V. D. Savarkar, in 1954 "that it was at a private and personal meeting between Netaji Subhas Babu and Savarkarji at Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, that a definite suggestion was made to Subhas Babu by Savarkarji that he should try to leave India and undertake the risk of going over to Germany to organise the Indian forces there fallen in German hands as captives and then with the German help should proceed to Japan to join hands with Sri Rash Behari Bose. To impress this point Savarkarji showed to Subhas Babu a letter from Sri Bose to Savarkarji written just on the eve of Japanese declaration of war".<sup>75</sup> The letter of Rash Behari referred to here was sent to Veer Savarkar about April, 1940 through a Buddhist monk, emphasising the urgency of preparation on behalf of Indian revolutionaries, as Japan's entry into the World War II seemed already in sight.

The historic meeting between Veer Savarkar and Subhas Chandra Bose took place, as stated by Savarkar himself, on June 22, 1940, when Subhas Chandra came to seek his advice on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity after his unsuccessful interview with Barrister M. A. Jinnah. It was on that occasion that Savarkar advised Subhas Chandra to leave the country and go to Europe to organize the Indian forces fallen at the hands of Germany and Italy, and as soon as Japan declared war, to attack British India from the Bay of Bengal or through Burma and declare the independence of Hindusthan.<sup>76</sup> Thus it is clear that it was Savarkarji who impressed upon Subhas the urgent need

75. Letter of Sri Bal Savarkar to Sri Khitis Chandra Das, Joint Secretary of *Rash Behari Basu Smarak Samiti*, dated June 2, 1954. Savarkarji himself narrated this story in many public meetings as well as in his writings both in English and Marathi.

76. See the book in Marathi entitled *Veer Savarkaranchi Abhinav Bharat Sangata Samayinchi Utkrisha Bhashane* or Veer Savarkar's Best Speeches About Abhinav Bharat, pp. 72-76.

for going out of the country and joining hands with Rash Behari Bose for organizing an armed attack against British India at the suitable opportunity. It is pertinent to observe that Savarkar was perhaps the only Indian leader who on the eve of the Second World War persistently pleaded in his speeches and writings the supreme importance of learning the art of modern warfare by Indian youths by joining the Armed Forces either in India or outside. Under his direct inspiration many a young man of India left the country at that time with this end in view.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from the fruitful suggestion communicated by Rash Behari to V. D. Savarkar, Rash Behari also sent a similar call to Subhas in his letters to his other friends and colleagues in India. Sri Jatindra Lochan Mitra, a member of the revolutionary party and a colleague of Hari Kumar Chakravarty etc., has stated that in 1937-38 J. C. Das, Managing Director to the Ballygunge Central Bank, returned from Japan to India with a letter from Rash Behari Bose in which he had urged upon the Indian revolutionaries to send an important leader to Japan, preferably Subhas Chandra Bose. The letter, written in Bengali, also contained the following words: "Now or never, nor for ever". Jatindra Lochan Mitra who was at that time the Consulting Engineer to the Ballygunge Bank and Ballygunge Real Property and Building Society, received this letter from J. C. Das and communicated its contents to Hari Kumar Chakravarty. Another letter received by Srish Chandra Ghose of Chandernagore also contained a

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77. *Savarkar And His Times* by Dhananjay Kerr (1950), pp. 253-60.

It is interesting to notice here what Subhas Chandra Bose declared later with regard to Savarkar's policy of Hindu militarisation. On July 25, 1944 Subhas Chandra declared: "When due to misguided political whims and lack of vision almost all the leaders of Congress party have been decrying all the soldiers in Indian Army as mercenaries, it is heartening to know that Veer Savarkar is fearlessly exhorting the youths of India to enlist in the Armed Forces. These enlisted youths themselves provide us with trained men and soldiers for our Indian National Army".

similar suggestion with reference to Subhas Chandra Bose.<sup>78</sup>

The cumulative effect of all these factors together with Sri Hem Ghose's advice to Subhas in the Presidency Jail (July 2, 1940)<sup>79</sup> ultimately led Subhas Bose to take a firm decision to leave the country and to work from outside for the cause of Indian Independence. The decision once taken, the responsibility of translating it into practice was entirely his own, and thanks to his shrewdness, he managed to leave the country (January, 1941) unnoticed, and finally arrived at Tokyo (June, 1943) *via* Germany to join hands with Rash Behari Bose.

The advent of Subhas Chandra Bose in Japan in 1943 was a veritable god-send. A man of commanding personality, full of indomitable will and energy, with courageous adherence to conviction and consummate political ability, he was regarded by Rash Behari as the fittest person to lead the movement of Indian Independence in East Asia. So, Rash Behari joyfully made over to him the supreme honour of the Presidentship of the Indian Independence League. In a mammoth gathering at Singapore he declared (July 4, 1943):

"Friends and Comrades in Arms! In your presence today I resign my office and appoint Deshsevak

78. Sri Amar Nath Roy, the Proprietor of the Globe Nursery, Calcutta, informs the present writer that both Srish Ghose and Sri Roy had privilege of reading this letter in a room on the second floor of Sri Roy's residence at 25 Ramdhan Mitra Lane, Calcutta. Sri Roy states that during 1911-15 he (alias Smith) worked as a peon to Srish Chandra Ghose and Chandernagore revolutionaries, and that a stationery shop in the New Market run by Jatindra Mohan Rakshit and himself was the "post-box" for Rash Behari Bose. A reference to Rash Behari's letter to J. M. Rakshit, New Market, was made by Mr Denham in his Report on Raja Bazar Case.

79. Sri Hem Ghose, the veteran leader of the "Mukti-Sangha" renamed as "Bengal Volunteers" after 1920, had a long talk with Subhas Chandra Bose in the Presidency Jail at dead of night on the 2nd July, 1940, the date of Subhas Chandra's arrest in connection with the Holwell Monument Movement. Subhas Bose sought advice from his senior colleague about his future policy and got the reply: "Either you will have to rot in jail or leave the country".

Subhas Chandra Bose as President of the Indian Independence League... India's best is represented in him.

"You know I have dedicated my life, in my own humble way, to the cause of our sacred Motherland. That is my life's mission. And as long as there is breath in my body, I shall be the soldier that I have always been—the soldier in the battle for Mother India's freedom. And, of course, I shall not spare myself in giving him all that I can give him—whole-hearted co-operation, assistance and advice in the battle that is now ahead of us".

Thus the message of Sri Aurobindo "Work that she may prosper. Suffer that she may rejoice" was incarnated in the life of Rash Behari. He set a new example of spiritualized self-abandon to the cause of patriotism in keeping with the fiery idealism of the Young Bengal of 1905. Rash Behari's relinquishment of power did not mean that he had retired from politics. Far from it. His new role was now in the capacity of the Supreme Advisor to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind the best of which was represented in him. Very truthfully has he been described by Subhas Chandra Bose as "the Father of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia since the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War".



Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee  
( December 8, 1880—September 10, 1915 )



Jyotindra Nath with his beloved horse *Sunday*



## CHAPTER THREE

# JYOTINDRA NATH MUKHERJEE AND JUGANTAR REVOLUTIONARIES

### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Described in official records as 'one of the most dangerous anarchists', Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee<sup>1</sup> fills a very large place in the history of India's revolutionary movement. Born in the house of his maternal uncle at Kaya in Nadia (December 8, 1880), he spent his boyhood in the village home of his maternal uncle, Basanta Kumar Chatterjee. His uncle's house became the scene of a large social congregation during the *Pujas* when many a respectable person of Kushtea and the neighbourhood thronged at his place.<sup>2</sup> This naturally brought Jyotindra Nath into lively contacts with a large number of persons during his boyhood and stood him in good stead in his future life. Among his associates of those days many turned out later to be his devoted followers in his political mission. Having lost

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1. It is regrettable to note that the name of the hero of Balasore fame who died fighting in 1915 continues to be misspelt even to this day. In most of the articles and biographical sketches about him the reader finds that his name has been spelt as Jatindra Nath Mukherjee. This is absolutely incorrect. His real name was Jyotindranath Mukherjee. The memorial dated September 2, 1911 submitted by him to Hardinge, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, contained his autograph signature revealing the above spelling. Vide Home (Poll.) Deptt. Proceedings of the Government of India, September 1911, Nos. 124-125, Part B.
  2. Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee's letter, dated 30-3-1911 to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Financial Department. The fact stated above is corroborated by Sri Benoy Chandra Roy of Kushtea, at present aged 63, who was a frequent visitor to Jyotindra Nath's house at Kaya in his boyhood and early youth. On two such occasions Jyotindra Nath impressed his audience in the role of "Pratapaditya" and "Rana Pratap" in theatrical performances.

his father in his childhood he was brought up under the care of his mother who infused in him both patriotism and fearlessness. Deeply interested in sports and physical exercises from his boyhood,<sup>3</sup> he built up in his youth a great reputation as an all-round sportsman, an excellent swimmer, a skilled rider, an expert athlete, a devoted social worker and a kind-hearted nurse to the sick and the wounded.<sup>4</sup> He combined in his character an unusual degree of toughness with fineness.

Having passed the Entrance Examination from the Krishnagore A. V. School in 1898,<sup>5</sup> Jyotindra Nath came to Calcutta for receiving his higher education in the Central College of which Khudiram Bose, the distinguished educationist, was the founder-Principal. An embodiment of dare-devil energism, and animated by the ideal of "do or die for the country", Jyotindra Nath could not attach much importance to a conventional academic career and found in Calcutta a bigger sphere for his varied activities.

In 1903, a memorable incident took place in Jyotindra Nath's life, and this was his contact for the first time with Aurobindo Ghose and Jatindra Nath Banerjee (later Swami Niralamba) at the residence of Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan at Shyampukur Street, Calcutta.<sup>6</sup> It was from Aurobindo Ghose and Jatin

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3. Reader's attention is drawn to Sri Prithwindra Nath Mukherjee's serial articles on Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee published in the weekly *Basumat* during 1965-66. The articles are valuable more as a piece of literature than as a piece of scientific historical research. It is surprising that the writer has throughout misspelt the very name of Jyotindra Nath, his grandfather, as Jatindra Nath.
  4. Jyotindra Nath's love for horses and his capacity to tackle them was almost proverbial. Later in life he often said to his political associates: "Next to young men of India I love horses most".
  5. The Calcutta University Calendar for 1899, p. 287.
  6. *Biplabi Jatindra Nath* by Lalit Kumar Chatterjee (Cal. 1947). Lalit Chatterjee, Jyotindra Nath's youngest maternal uncle, has stated that both Jatindra Nath Banerjee and Aurobindo Ghose lived for some time in 1903 at the house of Jogen Vidyabhusan. According to Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, Jyotindra Nath came into contact with Jatin Banerjee and Aurobindo at the house of Jogen Vidyabhusan in 1903.

Banerjee that he received his baptism in the cult of 'purification by blood and fire' for Freedom's battle. He believed in the Gita ideal of *Nishkama Karma* or selfless work. His outward actions had a close correspondence to his inner spiritual life into which he was initiated by Bholananda Giri Maharaj (108) at Calcutta. That apart, Bholananda Giri Maharaj also inspired him to dedicate his life to the service of the motherland. Jyotindra Nath was also fortunate enough to have sat at the feet of Swami Vivekananda and Sree Sree Ma Sarada Devi whose influence on his moral personality was very great. He had contacts with Sister Nivedita, the famous firebrand of nationalism, and joined her as a social worker during plagues and epidemics.<sup>7</sup> While at Calcutta Jyotindra Nath mastered wrestling from the famous wrestler Khetra Charan Goho, son of Ambika Charan Goho, from whom Swami Vivekananda also had learnt wrestling.

#### IN SERVICE

About the year 1900 Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee bade good bye to his collegiate studies and took to service to earn an independent livelihood. Serving for some time as a stenographer in a merchant office in Calcutta, and then as a stenographer to Barrister Kennedy at Muzaffarpur, he was later appointed a Typist in the Bengal Secretariat on August 11, 1903. On May 15, 1904 he was appointed Stenographer to the Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal on Rs. 100 per mensem. "In 1907", as the Police Reports tell us, "he was sent to Darjeeling on some special work. From early youth he had had the reputation of a local Sandow and he soon attracted attention in Darjeeling in cases in which, true to his reputation as one of the earliest exponents of the physical force

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7. This information has been derived by the writer from Sri Benoy Roy of Kushtea already referred to.

party, he tried to measure his strength with Europeans. In 1908 he was leader of one of several gangs that had sprung up in Darjeeling, whose object was the spreading of disaffection, and with his associates he started a branch of the Anusilan Samiti, called the Bandhab Samiti".<sup>8</sup>

In April, 1908 Jyotindra Nath became involved in a quarrel with two army officers, Captain Murphy and Lt. Somerville, at the Siliguri railway station, and, consequently, legal proceedings were drawn up against him at Darjeeling for the assault he had committed to them.<sup>9</sup> After some time the case was withdrawn by the complainants (army officers). The Magistrate, however, advised Jyotindra Nath to behave properly in future. To this Jyotindra Nath said that he could not give assurance that he would refrain in future from taking similar action in self-defence or in the vindication of the rights of his countrymen. This was followed by his transfer to Calcutta in June, 1908. From that time until his arrest on January 27, 1910 he was posted at Calcutta save the period from September to the first week of November, 1909 when he "was at Darjeeling and in attendance upon" the Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Jyotindra Nath's contact with the Manicktola Garden House, the chief centre of revolutionary conspiracy in Bengal at that time, was earlier than his reposting in Calcutta, although he had never identified himself with that centre. He had his own idea of work and set himself to organize and train up a band of young men committed to the supreme work for the country—its liberation from foreign yoke by revolu-

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8. Vide the printed booklet entitled *Connections With The Revolutionary Organisation In Bihar And Orissa 1906-16* (pp. 100) published from Patna in 1917, with a Foreword by W. Sealy (Bihar Sp. Branch), dated Patna, September 7, 1917.
  9. *The Statesman*, January 28, 1910. Also see Jyotindra Nath's letter to Mr. Wheeler, the Financial Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, dated March 30, 1911.

tionary methods. Following the arrest of the Manicktola conspirators and the legal onslaught on the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti (1908-1909), a big vacuum was created in the political field of Bengal. The leaders were either jailed or deported and repressive laws were hurriedly passed by the Government to root out from the country the forces of violence and terror. Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee's appearance on the scene just at this juncture was a god-send to the revolutionary workers. Very soon he plunged himself deeply into politics, secretly undertaking missionary tours through the districts of Howrah, Nadia, Khulna, Jessore, Rajsahi, and 24-Parganas and setting up secret societies in each district under the command of a local leader.

#### EARLY POLITICAL WORK

By 1908-1909 a group of young men gathered round the personality of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, of whom the most important were Baladev Roy, Jnan Mitra, Jyotish Majumdar (Chandi), Amaresh Kanjilal, Suresh Chandra Majumdar (who later became the founder of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*), Devi Prasad Roy (Khuro), Satis Sarkar, Charu Ghose (of Chetla) as well as Nani Gopal Sen (of Howrah), Phanindra Nath Roy, Khitish Chandra Sanyal, Nalini Kanta Kar and Atul Krishna Ghose. A man of uncommon daring and force of character, Jyotindra Nath was looked upon by his associates as a hero, specially after his courageous feat of killing a Royal Bengal Tiger (1906) with a dagger in a jungle off Kaya in Nadia.<sup>10</sup>

10. The skin of the striped Bengal tiger (not leopard) killed by Jyotindra Nath in 1906 as well as the dagger with which it was killed was presented to Dr. Suresh Prasad Sarbadhikari by Jyotindra Nath as a gift of gratitude on his recovery from the fatal wounds he had sustained during his fight with that tiger. Dr. Kanak Sarbadhikari, son of Dr. Suresh Sarbadhikari and at present Principal of the Calcutta Medical College, has stated to the writer on 22-8-66 that his father who was then the leading

During these days, a major pre-occupation of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee was the organization and training up of a band of young men who would spread out into villages, doing social work and awakening the masses to the need of the hour. Circumstanced as India was at that time, Jyotindra Nath was a believer in the efficacy of guerilla fighting to bring the British rulers to their knees. But he was not slow at the same time to realize that in order to render guerilla fighting effective, the masses must be patriotically roused and drawn into the movement.<sup>11</sup> With this end in view Jyotindra Nath started, in collaboration with Bipin Behari Ganguli of the Attonnati Samiti, a joint mess at Sovaram Basak Street (just at the back of the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital) intended to be a nucleus of revolutionary thought and action. Its membership included Girindra Nath Bhowmic (Law student), Khitish Chandra Sanyal (I.A. student), Baladev Roy (Homeopathy student), Phanindra Nath Roy (Homeopathy student), Nalini Kanta Kar (Homeopathy student) and Debendra Nath Das (I.A. student), all belonging to Jyotindra Nath's group, as well as Ahindra Nath Chatterjee (M.A. student), Dharendra Nath Chakravarty (M.Sc. student), Ranen Ganguli (India Govern-

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surgeon of Calcutta took upon himself the responsibility for curing that fatally wounded patient whose whole body had been poisoned by the tiger's nails. He not merely operated upon the body of Jyotindra Nath, but also took the trouble of coming twice to his house daily to dress his wounds personally and not getting them done by his assistants which was the usual course, Dr. K. Sarbadhikari states further that the exemplary heroism of Jyotindra Nath acted as an inspiring force behind his father's organisation of the Bengal Regiment sent to the Mesopotamian battle-field in 1916. The skin of the tiger, padded and mounted with the head in bold relief, was laid on the floor of their house as he saw it in his boyhood days. The head was in tact together with the tongue and the ears except bearing some marks of wound on the neck and on the body. The story that the tiger's head was broken into pieces by Jyotindra Nath is thus an exaggeration. Although the skin has already perished, the dagger is still preserved in the family of Dr. K. Sarbadhikari.

11. The autobiographical MSS in Bengali of Sri Nalini Kanta Kar.

ment employee), all belonging to Bipin Ganguli's group. Among those who frequented this mess were Satis Chandra Sarkar, Devi Prasad Roy, Atul Krishna Ghose and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee as well as Harish Chandra Sikdar, Probhas Chandra De, Tinkari De and Bipin Behari Ganguli. The mess was financed in the main by Jyotin Mukherjee and Probhas De.<sup>12</sup> After some time the lieutenants of Jyotindra Nath except Girin Bhowmic and Deben Das shifted to another mess at Kasi Bose Lane, to which a new boarder was added and he was Satis Chandra Sarkar.

#### MURDER OF SAMSUL ALUM

Although political dacoity or murder of officials was not the main plank of Jyotindra Nath's revolutionary programme (himself favouring guerilla fighting as the practical means of driving out the British from India), yet he had no moral scruples against political dacoity or murder as such. What counted with him most was the practicability and efficacy of the means adopted in a given situation. While waging political battle with a powerful adversary he did not allow ordinary ethics or morality to get the upper hand in him. In his political approach to the issue of violence *vis-a-vis* non-violence he appears to be a close follower of Aurobindo Ghose rather than of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>13</sup> As Sri Benoy Roy has stated, Jyotindra Nath accompanied by Manmatha Nath Bhowmic, Jatin Roy, Benoy Roy etc. led one dacoity expedition to Raita in Nadia on November 29, 1908, and encashed the looted ornaments at B. Sarkar's Jewellery Shop in Calcutta.<sup>14</sup> Again, Jyotindra Nath played an impor-

12. *Ibid.* The point receives corroboration from Sri Ranen Ganguli of Bantra, Howrah, who was then the steward of the mess.

13. Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee: *Sri Aurobindo And The New Thought In Indian Politics* (Cal 1964, p. XXXI).

14. According to the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal (F.N. 229/15), the property looted from Raita in November, 1908 was valued at Rs. 1,915. Jyotindra Nath's leadership in Raita

tant role in the murder of Samsul Alum, the Deputy Superintendent of Police (C.I.D.) on January 24, 1910. He not merely gave it his moral sanction, but also had it accomplished by his lieutenant Satis Sarkar through the instrumentality of Biren Datta Gupta, a young member of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti. Samsul Alum had made himself a contemptible creature in the eyes of the revolutionaries for his tenacious hunting out of the persons involved or supposed to be involved in the Alipore Bomb Case as well as for his nakedly vindictive attitude to the under-trial prisoners. But the immediate provocation given by him was his disrespectful utterance towards the womenfolk of a house he went to for a search. The murder of Inspector Nandalal Banerjee by the Bengali revolutionaries on November 9, 1908 and the murder of Ashutosh Biswas, the Public Prosecutor of Alipore and Instructor of the Crown Counsel in the Bomb Case inside the Alipore courtyard on February 10, 1909, had already set before Young Bengal a tradition of violence and had prepared the background for Alum's murder.

The murder of Samsul Alum left the authorities terrified and bewildered, and led to the arrest of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee on the morning of January 27, 1910 as the principal brain behind this assassination. Although Jyotindra Nath was released by the Police Commissioner from the charge of abetment of murder (January 30, 1910), yet he was again immediately arrested and sent to Howrah along with Suresh Chandra Majumdar, Lalit Kumar Chatterjee and Nibaran Chandra Majumdar to stand trial under Sec. 400 I.P.C. "for being members of a gang of dacoits". After several days Jyotindra Nath was again transferred to the Alipore Central Jail on February 9, 1910. Taking their cue from some statements of Biren Datta

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exCedition is also corroborated by Sri Khitish Chandra Sanyal of Kushtea, and Satis Chandra Sarkar of North Bengal.



Gupta, a last-minute effort was made by the Calcutta Police to implicate Jyotindra Nath in Alum's murder by arranging a court trial in the Presidency Jail by Mr. Swinhoe, the Officiating Chief Presidency Magistrate, on February 20, 1910, just one day before Biren Datta Gupta's execution. The trial, however, could not be undertaken as Barrister J. N. Roy representing Jyotindra Nath "protested strongly against being called upon, without notice, to cross-examine a witness at the pistol's point, without knowing until a few moments beforehand the charge against him, and with no opportunity of interviewing his client".<sup>15</sup> Shortly afterwards and while still in jail, Jyotindra Nath was again arrested on a charge of having committed offences under Sections 121, 121A, 122, 123 and 124 of the Indian Penal Code. Thereafter on several occasions Jyotindra Nath was produced before the Additional District Magistrate of Howrah in course of the enquiry continuing for several months. On July 20, 1910 Jyotindra Nath along with others was committed to take his trial before the Special Tribunal of the High Court, and the trial began before a Bench composed of the Hon'ble Chief Justice, and the Hon'ble Justices Brett and Digambar Chatterjee on December 1, 1910. On February 21, 1911 Jyotindra Nath "was acquitted and discharged by the said Special Tribunal, before the trial had ended".<sup>16</sup>

#### THE ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

After his release from the Howrah Gang Case on February 21, 1911 Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, who was then dismissed from Government service, took to contractorship as a means of livelihood (1911) and set

15. *The Statesman*, February 22, 1910.

16. Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee's memorial to the Viceroy, dated September 2, 1911, seeking clarification as to why he should not be re-instated in his Government post on his acquittal.

up his headquarters, first, at Golapnagar in the district of Murshidabad, and, then, at Jhinaidaha in the district of Jessore where he began to live with his family. He got the contract, first, of the earth-work for the Sara Bridge, then of Jhinaidaha-Jessore Light Railway, and, thirdly, of the Screw Pipe Bridge at Jhinaidaha under the District Board of Jessore, and, finally, of the new Munsiff Court under P.W.D. at Magura. During this period Jyotin Mukherjee strove hard to re-organize his political associates and followers, and with this end in view had also met in a conference in 1912 at the house of Benoy Roy of Kushtea, attended by Jatin Roy of North Bengal, Gopen Roy of Pabna and also by Khitish Sanyal of Kushtea, Nalini Kanta Kar of Jadubaira and Manmatha Nath Bhowmic of Kaya.<sup>17</sup> Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, that daring young man and an organizer of several political dacoities including those of Chingripota and Netra during 1907-09, developed intimacy with Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee during their jail-life as under-trial prisoners in the Howrah Gang Case. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya and his comrade Hari Kumar Chakravarty, both being members of the Harinavi branch of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, had heard a good deal about Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee from Phani Chakravarty of Chingripota, 24-Parganas, who had met Jyotin Mukherjee first in 1908 in Darjeeling. After his release from the Howrah Gang Case in 1911, Narendra Nath Bhattacharya along with Hari Kumar Chakravarty gathered round Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee and acknowledged him as their leader. As has already been referred to, Nalini Kanta Kar and Atul Krishna Ghose, both belonging to village Jadubaira in Kushtea and also being members of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, had already joined the camp of

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17. Vide the MSS of Nalini Kanta Kar and the writer's interviews with Khitish Chandra Sanyal and Benoy Chandra Roy of Kushtea.

Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee some time after their fruitful meeting with him at his village home in Kaya about March, 1909.<sup>18</sup> Jadugopal Mukherjee, another member of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, did not have any direct contact with Jyotindra Nath until 1913-14, but was emotionally attached to Jyotindra Nath through the medium of his friend Narendra Nath Bhattacharya.<sup>19</sup> Thus by 1911-12 Jyotindra Nath had organized a big circle around him which counted, among others, Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, Hari Kumar Chakravarty, Nalini Kanta Kar and Atul Krishna Ghose.

### THE FLOOD HAVOC OF 1913

The next landmark in the revolutionary activities of Bengal was closely connected with the inundation of 1913 bringing in its train untold sufferings and losses to the districts of Burdwan and Midnapore. This natural calamity came to the revolutionaries as a boon in disguise. It gave them an opportunity of mixing freely and intimately with the suffering masses in course of their relief work. It also gave them an opportunity of getting together, otherwise separated from one another by group or sectional loyalties. The revolutionaries of various groups and denominations flocked to the flood-affected regions and began to work in close unison ostensibly for relief work but ultimately for their supreme political mission. Among those who played an important role in Burdwan and Midnapore at this stage were Makhan Lal Sen, Aswini Lal Roy, Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Moti Lal Roy, all of whom had gone there as *desha-sevakas* (patriots) and *samaj-sevakas* (social-

18. The MSS of N. K. Kar.

19. Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee has informed the writer during her interview with him at Ranchi in September, 1966, that since the killing of a tiger by Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee he began to look upon him as a great hero and felt a deep stirring in his soul to have a glimpse of that hero as if he had fallen in love with him.

servants) and utilised the occasion for getting together in closer bonds. It was in this background that Jadugopal for the first time came into direct contact with Jyotin Mukherjee at Kanthi, which, however, did not grow into intimacy until February, 1915.<sup>20</sup>

#### ATTEMPTS AT AMALGAMATION

On their return to Calcutta towards the close of the year 1913, the revolutionary leaders began to think out a plan for the re-organization and amalgamation of all kindred spirits for the common cause. The Barisal party which had come into being as early as 1908 under the guidance of Satis Chandra Mukherjee (later Swami Prajnanananda), soon found in Naren Ghose Choudhury of Noakhali its redoubtable organizer, with its headquarters at Barisal and its branches in Noakhali, Comilla, Chittagong and Sylhet, and gained a position of importance in Bengal by 1914, particularly after its amalgamation in that year with the political group led by Nikhil Ranjan Guha Roy of Idilpur (Dt. Faridpur), the Sadhana Samaj of Hemendra Kishore Acharya Choudhury of Mymensingh and also the North Bengal group of Jatin Roy of Bagura.<sup>21</sup> With this enlarged Barisal party Jyotin Mukherjee's group met at a conference in March, 1915 on the roof of a mess at Sankar Ghose's Lane, Calcutta, attended by Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, Jadugopal Mukherjee and Atul Krishna Ghose, on the one hand, and Naren Ghose Choudhury, Jogen Basu and Manoranjan Gupta, on the other. The urgency for unity was stressed by Narendra Nath Bhattacharya specially in the background of a prospective armed rising in India with active collaboration from the German Government. Although no formal amalgamation took place at this stage, yet a practical amalgamation was forged out,

20. The writer's interview with Jadugopal Mukherjee.

21. The unpublished *Smriti-Katha* by Sri Manoranjan Gupta.

both sides agreeing to work under the leadership of Jyotin Mukherjee. This was not merely due to the towering personality of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee but also due to the practical retirement of Swami Prajnanananda in Benares and his subsequent internment.<sup>22</sup> It was now left for Jyotindra Nath to organize and lead the revolutionary groups in Bengal, particularly those described in official records as forming the 'Jugantar' revolutionaries or the 'Western Bengal Party'.<sup>23</sup>

Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee and his lieutenants who had been for a long time in close touch with the Attonnati Samiti of Bipin Behari Ganguli, strengthened their *entente* with the latter in the background of the First World War. It has to be noted that by 1914 the Barisal party had come to an understanding with the Attonnati Samiti for joint action. This triple *entente* bore valuable fruit in connection with the theft of Rodda's arms (August 26, 1914), which though planned and executed mainly by the Mukti Sangha of Dacca in collaboration with the Attonnati Samiti, yet in the disbursement of the consignments the hands Jyotin Mukherjee's lieutenants and of the Barisal party were conspicuously in evidence. Besides,

22. The writer's interview with Sri Manoranjan Gupta in July, 1965. Sri Gupta has further informed her that the liaison between Jyotin Mukherjee's group and the Barisal party was Sri Gupta himself who, as a Fourth Year student, had gone to Kalinagar in Kanthi Sub-Division, Midnapore, as a flood-relief worker in 1913, and had been much impressed by the personality of Jadugopal Mukherjee. The aforesaid meeting was proposed by Jadugopal Mukherjee to Manoranjan Gupta who had come to Calcutta in 1914 after passing the B.A. Examination. Notwithstanding the decision adopted at that meeting that the two groups would work out a common programme under their respective leaders, viz., Jyotin Mukherjee and Swami Prajnanananda, yet in practice the leadership of Jyotindra Nath over both the groups became an accomplished fact, particularly due to the absence of the Swamiji from Bengal.
23. The official analysis of the term "Jugantar" revolutionaries is to be found in Chapter I. Mr. Denham in his third report on the Rajabazar case, dt. 26.3.1914, and Mr. Tegart in his lengthy *Note On The Situation In Chandernagore*, dt. 10.3.1917, have used the term 'Western Bengal Party' with reference to these revolutionaries.

the Madaripur group of Purna Das was drawn close to Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee about this time. After the withdrawal of the Madaripur Conspiracy Case (January 17-April 19, 1914) which was instituted for numerous political dacoities in 1913 at Bharakair, Gopalpur, Kawakuri etc. committed by Purna Das's group,<sup>24</sup> a few of his devoted followers, viz., Chittapriya Roy Choudhury, Manoranjan Sen Gupta, Niren Das Gupta, Radha Charan Pramanik and Patit Paban Ghose began to live at Calcutta and soon joined hands with Jyotin Mukherjee to work for the contemplated armed rising in India. Thus during 1914-15 most of the principal revolutionary parties in Bengal, hitherto working isolatedly, had made an *entente* among themselves to form a united front and to work conjointly for an armed rising in India against the British *Raj*.

Attempts were also made at the same time to forge union with the Chandernagore revolutionary groups as well as with the Dacca Anusilan Samiti through the medium of the *Sramajibi Samabaya* (the Workers' Co-operative) of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpara. Started at Bowbazar in 1908 and then shifted to the College Street and Harrison Road junction, the *Samabaya* had been secretly functioning from the very beginning as a meeting place of the revolutionaries all over Bengal. Amarendra Nath Chatterjee was closely connected with Srish Chandra Ghose, Moti Lal Roy and Narendra Nath Banerjee, the leaders of Chandernagore revolutionaries, as well as with Amrita Lal Hazra and Pratul Chandra Ganguli of the Anusilan Samiti. Through Satis Sen Gupta of Serampore the *Samabaya* came into close touch with the Attonnati Samiti also. From the very outset Jyotindra Nath was an intimate friend of Amarendra Nath and a frequent visitor to the *Sramajibi Samabaya*. It was in this

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24. File No. 130/15 in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, fe. a "Note On The Madaripur Political Situation".

*rendezvous* that Rash Behari Bose, a Chandernagore man but really the leader of the U. P. and Punjab revolutionaries, came into close touch with Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee. The meeting between Amarendra Nath, Jyotindra Nath and Rash Behari at the *Panchabati* of Dakshineswar (probably at the close of 1913), which discussed the possibilities of an armed rising in India by inciting the Indian army serving under the British, was an important episode in the history of Indian revolutionary movement. Impressed by Jyotindra Nath's zeal, fiery energy and personality, Rash Behari asked the former to lead the movement in Bengal in the event of an armed rising and himself went to Benares (April, 1914) to organize the scattered forces into a revolutionary organization. Twice Jyotindra Nath had been to Benares—once he went with Rash Behari himself in December-January, 1913-14 to have a first-hand knowledge of the Benares situation, and again he met Rash Behari at Benares in January, 1915 to receive further instructions from him with regard to Bengal before the latter would leave for the Punjab. Thus we find that during the years 1914-1915 Jyotindra Nath had become the accredited leader of the revolutionary movement in Bengal enjoying the confidence of various revolutionary groups and organizations.

Efforts were also directed in this period to forge a union between Jyotin Mukherjee's party and the Dacca Anusilan Samiti. According to Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, an attempt at amalgamation was made by Amrita Lal Hazra and Biren Sen, on the one hand, and Jadugopal Mukherjee, Ashu Das, Benoy Datta and Atul Ghose, on the other, but without much success.<sup>25</sup> It was followed by other similar moves. Once in August, 1914 Nalini Kishore Guha, Pratul Chandra

25. The writer's interview with Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee.\*

Ganguli and Rabindra Mohan Sen met Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee at the *Arya Niwas* in Sealdah and discussed about the possibilities of amalgamation on the basis of the abandonment of the practice of political dacoities which was much favoured by the Anusilan Samiti as a practical means, first, of securing money for the revolutionary work, secondly, of keeping alive the revolutionary spirit in its members, and, thirdly, of terrorising the bureaucracy. But nothing fruitful emerged out of this meeting. A next meeting took place between the Anusilan Samiti men and Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, at Atul Ghose's house in Chidam Mudi's Lane. But this meeting also proved abortive.<sup>26</sup> Talks in this direction could not make much headway because of the sudden arrests of Nalini Kishore Guha, Pratul Chandra Ganguli and Rabindra Mohan Sen of the Anusilan Samiti by the agents of the bureaucracy. The much desired amalgamation with the Anusilan Samiti which could not be accomplished in 1914-15 was realized in 1916-17 when, after the arrests of the important leaders of the Anusilan Samiti, its absconding members went to Chandernagore for shelter and joined hands with other absconders at that place representing different political groups.

#### PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND REVOLUTION

The outbreak of the World War I in August, 1914 gave a mighty stimulus to India's revolutionary movement. It created such international situations as enabled the Indian revolutionaries to function more effectively, particularly by making use of foreign military and financial assistance. The failure of the plan of an armed rising from Peshwar to Bengal as organized by Rash Behari Bose (February, 1915) inspired Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee to organize a second

26. Vide the writer's interview with Sri Nalini Kishore Guha. Also see N. K. Guha's *Banglay Biplab-bad*, p. 322.



revolutionary uprising in India by adopting more effectual steps for carrying through the plan successfully. Jyotindra Nath believed that without international co-operation India could not work out her salvation all alone, and naturally he looked up to Germany, Britain's deadliest enemy, for effective assistance to India's revolutionary movement.

The prospect of German help in favour of Indian revolutionaries was first indicated in Bernhardt's book entitled *Germany And The Next War* (October, 1911). Mr. J. C. Ker, I. C. S., who was Personal Assistant to the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, during 1907-1913, wrote the following in this connection: "There can be little doubt that, in risking war with England, the Germans took account of what they believed to be the situation in India. The importance they attached to this matter is apparent from the references to India in Bernhardt's book *Germany And The Next War*, while the tour through India of the Crown Prince, and the subsequent private visit of the affable and polite Lieutenant Von Schweinitz of the First Prussian Foot Guards, who managed to see a good deal of the army at Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and the Khyber, were not perhaps entirely pleasure trips. Public opinion in Germany was not left unprepared; on the 6th of March, 1914, the Berliner Tageblatt published an article on 'England's Indian Trouble' in which the writer took a gloomy view of the situation, and predicted that the day of reckoning for England would come 'far sooner than official negligence dreams of'."<sup>27</sup> A letter of Dharendra Kumar Sarkar (younger brother of Prof. Benoy Sarkar of international repute) written on the eve of the First World War, from Germany to Satis Sen of Serampore, Bengal, communicating to the latter

27. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917* (Calcutta, 1917).

Bethmann Hollweg's (German Chancellor's) assurance of armed assistance to the Indian cause gave further encouragement to the Bengal revolutionaries for organizing a second upsurge.<sup>28</sup> The formation of the Berlin-India Committee (September, 1914) which was transformed into the Indian Independence Committee with the avowed object of securing German military-*cum*-financial assistance for organizing an armed rising in India as well as for making attacks at the eastern and western gates of the British Indian Empire, was a further encouragement to the Bengal revolutionaries. The news was brought home to them by a number of men including Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya, who had been associated with the early organization of the Committee at Berlin and had returned to India in late 1914.<sup>29</sup>

The specific message of the shipment of arms to India was conveyed to the Bengal revolutionaries by Jitendra Nath Lahiri, a member of the Berlin-India Committee (or the I. I. C.), who had returned to India from Berlin in early March, 1915. It has been learnt from Sri Lahiri that after being instructed by Viren Chattopadhyay, the life and soul of the Berlin-India Committee, to ask the Bengal revolutionaries to send an emissary to the German Consul at Batavia for giving proper guidance to the ship-load of arms to the Indian shores, Jitendra Nath in no time left Berlin for India. On his arrival in Bengal he first met Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpara, and, then, apprised the Bengal leaders of the instructions of the Berlin-India Committee in a secret conference held at Amarendra Nath's residence, attended by Amarendra Nath Chat-

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28. The writer's interview with Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee in February, 1966.

29. *Europe Bharatiya Biplaber Sadhana* by Dr. Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya. On his return to India Dr. Bhattacharya contacted Ashu Das of Hooghly and through his medium sent to Jadugopal Mukherjee a formula of Spandau bomb, a powerful type of explosive manufactured at Spandau in Germany during the War.

terjee himself, Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, Hari Kumar Chakravarty, Atul Krishna Ghose etc.<sup>30</sup> Narendra Nath Bhattacharya who was not present in that meeting was soon chosen as the emissary for Batavia. Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, however, communicates to the writer in a letter (25.8.66) that Jitendra Nath, on his return to Bengal, informed Jadugopal of the message of the Berlin-India Committee probably at his Beniatola Street residence who, on his turn, conveyed it to Jyotindra Nath then putting up as an absconder at a house in Khiderpore.

Closely following upon this, a secret meeting was held at the Ram's Ghat at Uttarpara on the bank of the Ganges to formulate a programme of work for the second rising. Besides Amarendra Nath Chatterjee of Uttarpara and Moti Lal Roy and Srish Chandra Ghose of Chandernagore, Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, Atul Krishna Ghose, Makhan Lal Sen and Bipin Behari Ganguli of Calcutta attended that midnight meeting. The problem of securing adequate arms and money before the rising could be successfully organized was discussed in details. The necessity of hurried contact with the German Consulates at Bangkok, Batavia and Shanghai also received due attention at that meeting. Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee took the responsibility of supplying money for the cause, and Amarendra Nath Chatterjee was entrusted with providing safety to the absconders.<sup>31</sup>

The Indian revolutionaries had already set up their base of work both in Siam and Java. The foreign wing of the Indian revolutionary organization led by Jadugopal Mukherjee<sup>32</sup> and assisted by Satis Sen, Ashu

30. The writer's interview with Sri Jitendra Nath Lahiri at Serampore on 10.8.1966.

31. *Amor Dekha Biplab O Biplabi* by Moti Lal Roy, pp. 133-134. Also see the MSS of *Bharater Swadhinatar Itihas* by Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, p. 52.

32. The Proceedings of the Home (Poll.) Deptt. of the Government of India, January 1918, Nos. 396-397, Part B, mention Jadugopal

Das, Benoy Datta and Bhola Chatterjee<sup>33</sup> decided to carry on communication with Bangkok and Batavia through Atmaram and Naren Bhattacharya respectively. The Siam centre had been very much active about this time which had liaison with the Bengal revolutionaries through Bhola Nath Chatterjee.<sup>34</sup>

#### FUNDS FOR THE RISING

Before Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee went underground (February 24, 1915) he had been intimately connected with a number of incidents taking place in February, 1915. His bid for "rupees one lakh in a week" and the consequent political dacoities committed at Garden Reach and Beliaghata had close bearing with the prospective rising in near future. The Garden Reach motor raid of February 12, 1915 was organized by Naren Bhattacharya in collaboration with Atul Ghose, under the command of Jyotin Mukherjee. The actual dacoity was committed by Naren Bhattacharya and the Madaripur followers of Jyotindra Nath.

After the accomplishment of the dacoity while Naren Bhattacharya was proceeding next day to

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Mukherjee as the Director of Foreign Department, Indian Nationalist Party.

33. By 1907-08 these men were associated with Jadugopal Mukherjee. Benoy Datta and Bhola Chatterjee were members of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, and Satis Sen and Ashu Pas came to Calcutta from Serampore for having collegiate education.
34. Bhola Nath Chatterjee was an important link between the Bengal and Siam revolutionaries. As early as 1910-11 Bhola Nath had been to Penang and Singapore, and accompanied by Nani Bose dressed as a Brahmachari he again went to Siam in 1913 under Jadugopal's direction. There he made contacts with the Punjabi contractors engaged in the construction of Burma-Siam Railway through engineer Amar Singh, a prominent figure in the Siam conspiracy, who was later executed at the hands of the British. While in Siam, Bhola Nath contacted in April 1914 Kumud Mukherjee, a Bengali pleader living at Bangkok since March, 1912 and a supporter of the revolutionary cause, and returned to Calcutta by October of the same year. Bhola Nath introduced the name of Kumud Mukherjee to the Calcutta leaders as a sympathiser with their project at Bangkok. Nani Bose returned to Calcutta some time later through overland route on foot.

Ultadanga from Jadugopal's residence, he was arrested by Sub-Inspector Suresh Chandra Mukherjee at the five-street crossing of Shyambazar. He was, however, released on bail after Radha Charan Pramanik had been induced to make a confession.<sup>35</sup>

Altogether Rs. 18,000 of Messrs Bird & Co. were successfully looted in broad day light and properly utilised for the revolutionary cause.

Just as Rodda's mausers and cartridges stolen by the revolutionaries were distributed over wide areas and among different groups, so the money looted at Garden Reach was also similarly disbursed. Moti Lal Roy has stated that a portion of the money of Messrs Bird & Co. also found its way to Chandernagore to the extent of Rs. 2,000 in one-anna piece and Rs. 5,000 in 4 anna and 8 anna pieces.<sup>36</sup>

The Garden Reach dacoity was soon followed by another daring taxi raid at Beliaghata organized by the comrades of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee under his general direction. At 9-30 P.M. on February 22, the party led by Phanindra Nath Chakravarty and assisted

35. Vide the writer's interviews with Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya and Bipin Ganguli having taken initial shelter on the night of the Garden Reach dacoity (or may be the next night) at Jadugopal's house, left that place the following morning for Ultadanga where Bipin Ganguli had a shelter. As Naren Bhattacharya, after meeting Nirjharini Serkar (whom she regarded as his own mother) at the Shyambazar Street, had started for Ultadanga, he was suddenly arrested by S. I. Suresh Mukherjee. As soon as the information of the arrest of Naren Bhattacharya, the right-hand man of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee, had reached him, the latter sent a few persons to the Lal Bazar Thana to secure the release of Narendra Nath from the police custody by any means. But as Narendra Nath had already been transferred to the Alipore jail the scheme could not be carried out. Then, on Jadugopal's suggestion a bail was proposed for him and accepted on condition that one must confess about the Garden Reach dacoity. Radha Charan Pramanik was therefore instructed by Purna Das through his vakil to make a confession. It is to be further noted that from 20, Fakir Chand Mitra's Street, four young men including Radha Charan Pramanik and Patit Paban Ghose had been arrested on February 24, 1915 under the Arms' Act in connection with the Garden Reach dacoity.

36. Moti Lal Roy: *Amar Dekha Biplab O Biplabi*, pp. 134-136.

by Chittapriya, Manoranjan, Nirendra etc. "drove up in a taxi to the house of Lalit Mohan Brindaban Saha, a rice merchant of Beliaghata and decamped with Rs. 22,000 in cash. They were armed with pistols and threatened the rice merchant and his cashier, the latter of whom, on offering resistance, was wounded. It was also found that they had shot dead the chauffeur and thrown his body on the canal bank".<sup>37</sup> But unfortunately, the Beliaghata money did not come to the use of the revolutionaries as the cash box, when opened a few days later at the house of Prof. Probhas De, was found to have been filled in with paper chips only instead of rupee notes. The mischief must have occurred through some mysterious agency while the cash box was in transit.

Due to the non-availability of the Beliaghata money to the revolutionaries another dacoity at Pragpur (Dt. Nadia) had to be committed (April 30, 1915), but the miscarriage in the plan of retreat led to a skirmish between the revolutionary party and the police resulting in the tragic end to Sushil Sen's life. Meanwhile, a critical situation had arisen after the shooting of Nirod Haldar, a suspected spy, by Chittapriya Roy Choudhury at 73, Pathuriaghata Street (February 24, 1915) and the murder of S. I. Suresh Mukherjee (C. I. D.) by Naren Ghose Choudhury on the Cornwallis Street (February 28, 1915). As Nirod Haldar mentioned the name of Jyotin Mukherjee as the assassin in his dying statement in hospital, a warrant of arrest was immediately issued against Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee. Another warrant was also issued against Chittapriya who thereafter went underground. On February 28, 1915 absconder Chittapriya was placed as a bait at the Cornwallis Street

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37. The I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, File No. 755/1917.

and Manicktola Street crossing for the detection of Suresh Mukherjee.<sup>38</sup>

After these incidents had taken place, prudence counselled Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee to hide away from Calcutta for some time specially in view of the armed rising that was to take place soon. A suitable hideout for Jyotindra Nath began to be sought out, but he refused to stir out of Calcutta unless and until similar provisions could be made for his fellow absconders—Bipin Ganguli, Chittapriya and others—who were his constant companions during this critical period. His concern for the safety of his colleagues was clearly revealed in the following statement he had made to Jadugopal Mukherjee at Phani Chakravarty's residence at 12, Mirzaffar Lane: "Unless and until a similar shelter is procured for Bipin and others, I will not go". Bipin Ganguli, Naren Bhattacharya and Harish Sikdar were present on that occasion. This reveals Jyotindra Nath's integrity of character worthy of a great leader. A few months later he again refused to part company with his followers at Kaptipada for the sake of his own personal safety.

In March, 1915 Jyotin Mukherjee along with Chittapriya, Bipin Ganguli and others left for Bagnan where they were provided with a temporary shelter by the caricaturist Atul Sen, the Headmaster of Bagnan High School. Meanwhile, Nalini Kanta Kar, an old associate of Jyotin Mukherjee, went to Bagnan along with Naren Bhattacharya to have Jyotindra Nath's consent, and then proceeded from Calcutta to Mahuldiha in the Moubhanj State in Orissa where they were able to find out a suitable place at Kaptipada for Jyotindra Nath's hideout with the help of Sri Manindra Nath

38. According to Sri Manoranjan Gupta the party was led by the Barisal leader Naren Ghose Choudhury and it consisted of, besides himself, Chittapriya Roy Choudhury, Manoranjan Sen Gupta, Sushil Sen and Sachin Datta.

Chakravarty. The preliminary work done, Naren Bhattacharya came back to Calcutta to return to Kaptipada within a fortnight along with Jyotin Mukherjee and Chittapriya as well as Saileswar Bose of the Universal Emporium of Balasore. There at Kaptipada Nalini Kar had already constructed a thatched hut for the dwelling of Jyotindra Nath and others. Thus began a new phase of Jyotin Mukherjee's life—his life as an absconder at Kaptipada where he died heroically in action in September, 1915.<sup>39</sup>

#### FLOW OF GERMAN PURSE TO INDIA

According to an earlier decision, Narendra Nath Bhattacharya sailed for Batavia from Madras in April, 1915, after having met Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee at Kaptipada *en route*. M. N. Roy's statement in his *Memoirs* that he left for Java "before the end of 1914" is a mistake. Naren Bhattacharya took the pseudo name of C. A. Martin, put on European dress and spoke elegant English with correct accent. At Batavia Martin came into touch through the German Consul with Theodore Helfferich, a Batavian merchant, "who stated that a cargo of arms and ammunition was on its way to Karachi to assist the Indians in a revolution". He also contacted the Indian revolutionaries in Java, Siam and elsewhere. A Sikh *Ghadr* man, Atmaram by name, who was very important in the Siam conspiracy, proved to be of great help to Martin in his project.<sup>40</sup> Thanks to Martin and Atmaram, German

39. Nalini Kanta Kar's MSS.

40. From America Atmaram came to Siam *via* China and joined hands with other conspirators in seeking out overland routes for the smuggle of arms to India. In March, 1915 he visited India to gather a first-hand information of the Punjab and Bengal fronts and met Kaviraj Bejoy Krishna Roy and Jadugopal Mukherjee in Calcutta. After the Siam conspiracy had been unearthed Atmaram managed his escape to China where, assisted by Tarak Nath Das, he killed a British agent Harnam Singh at Nanking in February, 1917, for which act he was later executed at Shanghai.



money was rendered available to the Indian revolutionaries between June and August, 1915. During this period code telegraphic messages used to pass frequently between Bangkok and Batavia, on the one hand, and the revolutionary centres in Calcutta, on the other.

Three Calcutta addresses were generally found mentioned in these code telegrams sent from Weltevreden (part of Batavia) and from Bangkok. They were *Sramajibi Samabaya Ltd.* at the Harrison Road-College Street crossing; S. B. Mukherjee of Sonua Stone and Lime Co. at 101|1 Clive Street; and Harry & Sons at 41 Clive Street. Sudhangsu Bhushan Mukherjee, a friend of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, was the principal financier of the *Sramajibi Samabaya* and also the owner of that firm known as Sonua Stone & Lime Co. Although he was never included in the inner circle of the revolutionaries, yet in the *milieu* of the *Samabaya* he got into contact with quite a large number of them. Amarendra Nath Chatterjee writes that by supplying to Martin the address of Sudhangsu Mukherjee's firm he was indirectly responsible for the arrest of this innocent man, for which act of indiscretion he later expressed his regret.<sup>41</sup>

The Harry & Sons, a small firm of the order supplier class but having underground revolutionary connections, was established by Hari Kumar Chakravarty of Kotalia, 24 Parganas, who had intimate friendship with Narendra Nath Bhattacharya of the same village. The firm, "with a turn-over of less than Rs. 500/- a month"<sup>42</sup> was founded a few years back with Hari Kumar Chakravarty as its sole proprietor who was assisted by his brother Makhan Lal Chakravarty as well as by Shyam Sundar Bose of village Kotalia. Besides, Hari Kumar Chakravarty set up at

41. The MSS. of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, p. 46.

42. The letter of the Police Commissioner Calcutta, to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, dated August 11, 1915.

Balasore a cycle-shop known as the Universal Emporium, with supply of goods from *Sramajibi Samabaya*, and left it to the charge of Saileswar Bose, brother of Shyam Sundar Bose, the clerk of Harry & Sons. This shop also served as a centre of secret revolutionary work and functioned as a liaison between absconder Jyotin Mukherjee at Kaptipada and his associates in Calcutta during this most critical period.

Altogether, four transactions of German money took place between Batavia, Bangkok and Calcutta through Martin and Atmaram. Mr. G. C. Denham of the I. B. Department, Bengal, prepared at that time a very interesting note on these financial transactions, which in part reads as follows:

"On the 24th June a telegram was sent by S. B. Mukherjee of the Sonua Stone & Lime Company, of 101/1 Clive Street, to Mr. Chotirmull, Batavia, asking for 5000 tons to be sent. On the 29th of the month a reminder was sent to Mr. Layard, C/o the Postmaster, Weltevreden. This second wire must have crossed another telegram despatched by one Thakur Das from Weltevreden in which he says he has remitted Rs. 5000. On the same day, that is the 29th June, the Eastern Bank, Calcutta, was remitted Rs. 5000 by the Netherlands Trading Society from Batavia, to be paid to Harry & Sons of 41 Clive Street. On the 3rd of July Hari Kumar Chakravarty, on behalf of Harry & Sons, received payment of Rs. 5000 from the Eastern Bank. He was identified by Mr. James Fergusson, of Messrs J. C. Duffus & Co., Jute Buyers. It appears that for many years the firm Harry & Sons had bought bazar articles for Messrs J. C. Duffus & Co., and Hari Kumar Chakravarty was thus known to Mr. Fergusson ... Rs. 5000 was drawn in hundred-rupee notes ... On the 3rd July a telegram was sent to Mr. Chotirmull, Batavia, by Harry & Sons acknowledging the receipt of the money".

This was the first transaction. About the second transaction Mr. Denham writes the following:

"The second transaction may be said to date from the 29th June when S. B. Mukherjee of the Sonua Stone and Lime Company, 101/1 Clive Street, wired to Mr. Chotirmull, Batavia, on the 29th asking for 10,000 bags of sugar; getting no immediate reply a reminder was sent on the 6th July asking for the 'bags sugar' to be sent immediately. This wire was sent in the name of Bhajan Lal and an address was given at 13 Balak Ram Dutt Lane. Enquiries have shown that this address is a false one. On the 12th July Harry & Sons received a wire from Thakur Das, Weltevreden, saying that 10,000 had been remitted. On the 13th of July the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank received 8,000 guilders which are the equivalent by exchange of Rs. 10,000. This money was remitted by Thakur Das to be paid to Harry & Sons. Apparently Hari Kumar Chakravarty was afraid to ask Mr. Fergusson again to guarantee him to the Bank and so, on the 20th of July, he got a friend, Nagendra Nath Dutt, an old member of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti, to introduce him to the Co-operative Hindusthan Bank, where he opened an account by depositing Rs. 500 in small notes. On the 21st he (Hari Kumar) deposited in the Bank his telegraphic transfer for the Rs. 10,000 on the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank. This money was credited to him and was realised by the Co-operative Hindusthan Bank who guaranteed the proper payment of the sum to Harry & Sons. On the 26th July Hari Kumar Chakravarty, on behalf of Harry & Sons the name in which the account was opened, withdrew Rs. 5,000 on a cheque payable to self. This money was paid by the Bank in four notes of Rs. 500, and thirty of Rs. 100...

"On the 4th August Hari Kumar Chakravarty, on behalf of Harry & Sons, withdrew a further Rs. 3000

on a cheque payable to self. This sum was paid in six notes of Rs. 500 which were exchanged for cash on the following day at the Currency Office. On the 6th August Hari Kumar withdrew Rs. 100 and on the 7th a further Rs. 200. It is probably due to this last withdrawal that we were able to obtain his Cheque Book and thus start our enquiries into his accounts".<sup>43</sup>

Thus in June and July, 1915 German purse amounting to Rs. 15,000 reached the hands of the revolutionaries in Calcutta. Naren Bhattacharya *alias* Martin, after having consulted with the German Consulates at Batavia and Bangkok and having been ensured by them about the despatch of arms to India, decided to come back to his country to make an on-the-spot arrangement to take delivery of those arms. During his stay at Batavia, he once ran the risk of being arrested by the British spies but was saved in a mysterious way. While going to Hongkong from Batavia he came to know on board the ship that the British spies, in their desperate search for a particular Indian, were making a frantic effort by searching every passenger at the Hongkong port. By cleverly placating the captain Martin induced him to stop his ship at mid-ocean so that the former could board another Batavia-bound ship from Hongkong and thus had a safe passage to Batavia.<sup>44</sup>

On June 15, 1915 Naren Bhattacharya *alias* Martin arrived at Madras at 8 O'clock in the morning

43. Mr. Denham's Note on the Financial Transactions of Harry & Sons, 41 Clive Street, Calcutta, and Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, dated August, 1915.

44. N. K. Kar's MSS. The incident was reported by Narendra Nath Bhattacharya to Nalini Kar and others during the former's visit to Kaptipada on his return to India by the middle of June, 1915. This is also corroborated by M. N. Roy's *Memoirs* (Bombay, 1964) in which the writer, with reference to his travelling on the China Sea (1915-16), states the following: "It was not always a pleasant experience, but at times quite exciting—being transported from one ship to another on the high seas in a life-boat, in order to avoid going to Hongkong" (p. 19).

with a draft of Rs. 18,000 "in the name of C. A. Martin, Esq., or bearer" in his hand. A passenger on the s. s. *Golconda*, he alighted from the ship on June 14 at Negapatam, and reached Madras next day by the Madras Mail and presented the draft in the Madras National Bank that very noon. As no letter of authorisation had yet reached the Bank, Mr. Griffiths of the said Bank refused to make cash payment to Martin on that day and asked him to wait till the next day when the s. s. *Golconda* was expected at Madras with the Straits Mails. But Martin declined to stay at Madras because of his other pre-occupations of a very urgent nature. Mr. Griffiths who had talked with the man called Martin for nearly half an hour gave the following description of him to Mr. Denham:

"Appeared to be almost certainly a Bengali; age about 23-25 years; height about 5'6" or 5'7"; fairly well-built and having a slim and wiry appearance; thin face and hair cut in European fashion; noticeably dark complexion; clean-shaven; good-looking; sharp features; talked English very well and appeared to be a thoroughly bright and intelligent person; wore European clothes similar to those worn in India in the hot weather".<sup>45</sup> Curiously enough, this man was at that time mistaken for Dhangopal Mukherjee, brother of Jadugopal Mukherjee, "on account of a remarkable case of photographic identification".

Naren Bhattacharya (*alias* Martin) sent a wire from Madras on June 15, 1915 under the pseudo name of White to Jadugopal Mukherjee at 62, Beniatola Street, Calcutta. The telegram ran thus: "Arrived here, starting tonight for Balasore, expect to see some one there; White".<sup>46</sup> Thus it is apparent that he left

45. Mr. Denham's Note on Further Enquiry re: the Draft cashed at the National Bank by A. N. Chatterjee and re: the Identity of C. A. Martin, dated September 2, 1915.

46. Letter of Mr. R. Clarke, Police Commissioner, Calcutta to Mr. Kerr,

for Balasore on the same date, whence he went to Kaptipada, staying with Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee for two days, and then he returned to Balasore to spend the night at the Dak Bungalow and to catch the Calcutta-bound mail next morning.<sup>47</sup> This information is corroborated by the I. B. Records of the Government of West Bengal which state thus: "Local evidence was obtained of the arrival of a Bengali, whose description tallied with that of Martin from Madras on 17th June and of his having stayed at the Balasore Dak Bungalow, the room having been engaged by Saileswar, who had taken him on to the emporium. This man was undoubtedly both White the sender of the telegram to Jadugopal and Martin the bearer of the draft, which he failed to cash on 15th June at Madras".<sup>48</sup>

Naren Bhattacharya brought from Batavia not merely a draft of Rs. 18,000 but also a large number of golden mohurs in a bag which he exchanged for cash mainly with the wife of K. P. Bose, the famous Bengali mathematician.<sup>49</sup> As to the draft we may observe that Naren Bhattacharya transferred it to Amarendra Nath Chatterjee who applied to the National Bank, Calcutta, on June 28 for the collection of the draft in his full signature and address. "The actual draft which was presented was obtained from Madras and is in the name of C. A. Martin, Esq., or bearer. It is drawn on the National Bank of India, Madras, by the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappy

the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated September 9, 1915.

47. N. K. Kar's MSS. Nalini Kanta Kar as a resident at Kaptipada spent two days with Naren Bhattacharya at that place and then accompanied him to Balasore and spent the night with him at the Dak Bungalow.
48. The confidential police report on the *Connections With The Revolutionary Organisation In Bihar And Orissa 1906-16*, p. 48.
49. The MSS. of N. K. Kar and also the writer's interviews with him. Sri Kar himself saw those mohurs at Kaptipada and later learnt about their exchange (or at least a portion of them) from his cousin sister, the wife of the late K. P. Bose.

for the amount of Rs. 18,292-10-10 and is dated Medan, 8th June, 1915".<sup>50</sup> After the presentation of the draft in the Calcutta National Bank, it was sent to Madras for collection, and on the receipt of a warrant for payment at Calcutta on July 6, the money was ultimately paid to Amar Chatterjee on July 7, 1915. Mr. Denham reports: "The money was paid in fifteen notes of Rs. 1000 (  $\frac{P.B.}{31}$  37172-86); thirty notes of Rs. 100 (  $\frac{F.V.}{62}$  17815-244); twenty-four notes of Rs. 10 and Rs. 6-14-10 in cash".<sup>51</sup>

A fourth financial transaction was finalised between Calcutta and Batavia, but, unfortunately, the money could not be realized on account of the sudden raid by the police of Harry & Sons on August 7, 1915 and the consequent arrests of Hari Kumar Chakravarty, Makhan Lal Chakravarty and Shyam Sundar Bose. On the receipt of a wire from Harry & Sons, dated August 5, 1915 for 10,000 bags of sugar (in other words, Rs. 10,000), Mr. Chotirmull from Batavia telegraphically informed Harry & Sons on August 14, 1915 about the remittance of Rs. 9, 670 to the Chartered Bank, Calcutta. On the same date the Chartered Bank of Batavia sent another wire to the Chartered Bank, Calcutta, instructing the latter to pay

50. Mr. Denham's Note on Further Enquiry *re* the Draft encashed at the National Bank by A. N. Chatterjee, dated September 2, 1915.

51. Mr. Denham's Note on Financial Transactions, dated August, 1915. In *Bharater Swadhinatar Itihas*, a Bengali MSS. lying at present in the custody of his family at Uttarpara, Amarendra Nath Chatterjee has wrongly stated that he cashed the draft at the Allahabad Bank. Amar Chatterjee, however, writes that a portion of this money was paid by him to Sudhangsu Bhusan Mukherjee who had hitherto spent a lot of money for revolutionary work through the *Sramajibi Samabaya* (p. 47). Besides, as Mr. Denham states: "It is significant that one of the thousand rupee notes paid to Amarendra Nath is undoubtedly that given by Benoy Datta to his brother Hari Anukul Datta of the Calcutta Camera Company".

to Harry & Sons "Ninety six hundred repees".<sup>52</sup> Thus out of the total sum of Rs. 42,892 remitted by the Germans to the Bengal revolutionaries, Rs. 31,546 were actually received by them, and not Rs. 33,000 as stated in the *Sedition Committee Report* (p. 82).

### THE *Maverick* EPISODE

The prospect of the arrival of a ship-load of arms to India purchased with German money and sent by German agents from America under orders from the German Foreign Office,<sup>53</sup> gave a new dimension to the Indian revolutionary activities.

Hans Tauscher of the Krupp Agency, New York, under instructions from Captain Franz Von Papen, the military attache of the German Embassy at Washington, purchased ten carloads of arms and ammunition in January, 1915, ostensibly for a Mexican port, but really for shipment to India.<sup>54</sup> These were shipped to the *Annie Larsen*, chartered from Olson & Mahony in San Francisco, at the Californian port of San Diego, "from which port she sailed on March 6,

52. See the list of telegrams found in Check Office, Singapore or Calcutta, during this period in File No. 921/1915 in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.

53. "Cablegrams sent by Alfred Zimmermann, the head of the German Foreign Office, which were transmitted to Count Von Luxburg, former German charge in Argentina, by the Swedish legation, and by him sent to Ambassador Von Bernstorff at Washington, D.C., directly connect Germany with the Hindu conspiracy and show that the entire project was financed by Von Bernstorff in this country on direct orders from Zimmermann"—Vide the bound volume containing clippings from various American newspapers of 1917-18 on Indo-German conspiracy, presented to the National Library, Calcutta, by Dr. Chandra Kanta Chakravarty (p. 24). As the clippings are not properly arranged, the exact names and dates of the newspapers are not easy to ascertain. The newspapers referred to, however, comprise *San Francisco Call*, *San Francisco Bulletin*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *New York World* etc.

54. Vide the article by Kalyan Kumar Banerjee on Indo-German Conspiracy published in the *Modern Review* for August, 1965. *The Sedition Committee Report*, 1918, puts the figures of arms and ammunition at "30,000 rifles with 400 rounds of ammunition each and 2 lakhs of rupees" (p. 82), while Mr. Kalyan Banerjee puts it at eight thousand rifles and four million cartridges.



1915, with P. H. Schluter as captain and W. A. Page as super-cargo".<sup>55</sup>

The *Annie Larsen* "went first to Socorro Island, off Mexico, where she waited for about 3 weeks for the arrival of the *Maverick* to which it was to transfer her cargo for shipment to India". But running short of fresh water and provisions, the *Annie Larsen* wandered about until it reached after more than a month the port of Hoquiam, Washington, where it was seized by the U. S. Government with her cargo of arms and ammunition. The ship was then termed a "mystery ship".<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, another ship, the *Maverick*, an obsolete oil tanker was purchased from the Standard Oil Company of San Francisco on March 16, 1915 by John L. Craig, a millionaire Long Beach ship-builder with German funds supplied to him by Fred Jebson. The ship was then taken to Long Beach, where it was repaired, \$27,000 being sent to Craig to pay for the repairs by the German Consulate at San Francisco. The next step was the organization of the *Maverick* Steamship Company by Ray Howard, a Los Angeles attorney, at the request of Jebson, who practically ran the German Consulate at San Francisco.<sup>57</sup>

Having been provided with funds and supplies both for herself and the *Annie Larsen*, the *Maverick* sailed from San Pedro, near Los Angeles, in California on April 23, 1915 with a young American Starr-Hunt as its super-cargo.<sup>58</sup>

"The personnel on board", writes Mr. Ker, "con-

55. For the version of Mr. Preston, the United States District Attorney in the San Francisco Trial of 1917-18, as reported in American newspapers see C. K. Chakravarty's bound volume (p. 29) in the National Library, Calcutta.

Mr. Kalyan Kumar Banerjee, however, writes in his essay that the *Annie Larsen* sailed from San Diego on March 8, 1915.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 29—Version of Mr. Preston in the San Francisco Trial.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

58. K. Banerjee's article in the *Modern Review* for August, 1965.

sisted of 25 officers and crew, a passenger named B. Miller who said he was a Swedish engineer but appeared to be a German, and five natives of India who called themselves Persians and were signed on as waiters". According to Starr-Hunt, who received instructions from Fred Jebson, the master mind behind the *Maverick* plot and who himself typed them in German, the *Maverick* was to steam from San Pedro via San Jose del Cabo to Socorro Island where it was to receive the arms and ammunition from the *Annie Larsen* and then to proceed to Anjer, Java, with its cargo of arms.

"The rifles, machine guns and other arms were to be placed in an empty oil tank and flooded over with oil. The ammunition was to be placed in an empty tank, but not flooded unless the *Maverick* was overhauled by an enemy cruiser. In the event of being stopped by enemy cruisers and the cargo discovered the bilges of the steamer were to be opened and the vessel sunk". At Anjer, as Starr-Hunt states, a small boat flying a certain signal outlined in the instructions would meet the *Maverick* and would govern the future movement of the ship and the disposition of the cargo. Accordingly, messages were transmitted to Batavia, Manila and Honolulu. But if the *Maverick* failed to meet its guide at this stage, it was to proceed to Bangkok where a German pilot would come aboard in a small boat and take charge of the steamer and her cargo.<sup>59</sup>

But, unfortunately, at Socorro Island the *Maverick* "learned from 2 castaway sailors of the schooner Emma" of the plight of the *Annie Larsen* and its leaving the Mexican coast "thirteen days before". The captain of the *Maverick* "received a note to the same effect, left for him by the supercargo of the *Annie Larsen*, asking him to await her return".<sup>60</sup> Accordingly,

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59. Evidence of Starr-Hunt in the San Francisco Trial, as reported in American newspapers of 1917-18—Vide the bound volume of C. K. Chakravarty (p. 51).

60. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*.

the *Maverick* waited for about a month in vain in expectation of meeting the *Annie Larsen*, then proceeded to Hilo, Hawii, under instructions from Jebson's office<sup>61</sup> after having destroyed all the revolutionary literature it carried in the engine room. The *Maverick* reached Hilo about June 14, 1915 and "received from the captain of a German ship orders to proceed to Johnson Island, a remote spot of South-West of Hawii, and there await the *Annie Larsen*". But as the plot leaked out in the local press, it appears that the original plan was abandoned at this point, and after a stay of a fortnight the *Maverick* was ordered to proceed on her voyage to Anjer, Java, touching at Johnson Island as arranged, but without any hope of meeting the *Annie Larsen*.<sup>62</sup> The *Maverick* reached Java on July 20, 1915, lay for some time outside Tandjong Priole, Batavian harbour, in July, 1915 until it roused suspicion and it was seized by the Dutch warships.

#### PREPARATION FOR THE RISING

According to official plan, the *Maverick* was to ship off the expected arms and ammunition at the Indian port of Karachi (now in West Pakistan), but thanks to Narendra Nath Bhattacharya's diplomatic bargain with Theodore Helfferich at Batavia, it was arranged to unload the cargo at Raimangal in Bengal which was a very suitable site for the aforesaid transaction. "The Commander-in-Chief of the China Station", as the Intelligence Branch Records of the

61. Miss Sue Clark, Secretary of Fred Jebson, was recalled as a witness in the San Francisco Trial. "She testified that when Captain H. C. Nelson telephoned from San Diego to Jebson's office asking for instructions for the *Maverick* after the return from Socorro Islands, where it had failed to meet the *Annie Larsen*, she went to E. H. Von Schack, German Vice-Consul for instructions, Jebson having left the city.

"Von Schack, she stated, told her to tell Captain Nelson to go to Hilo, where he would receive further orders"—Vide C. K. Chakravarty's bound volume, p. 24.

62. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*.

Government of West Bengal affirm, "has sent up from Singapore a reproduction of the tracing of the mouths of the Hooghly found on the German Secret Service Agent arrested at Singapore. This tracing shows the Sundarbans from the Cuttack coast practically to the Megna and gives the position of Calcutta and the railways along the Cuttack coast and to Diamond Harbour and Canning. On the original tracing were found two pin pricks. Of these one marked the North point of the island which we now know as 'Raimangal Island', and the other the North point of Dalhousie Island in the Matla River".<sup>63</sup>

This information gathered from Singapore was corroborated by the Batavian information also, on the basis of which Mr. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, wrote as follows on July 31, 1915: "I yesterday by means of a cipher telegram to Denham informed him and the Calcutta authorities that our information from Batavia was to the effect that the arms were to be landed at a point in the Sundarbans, some 60 or 70 miles from Canning Town".<sup>64</sup>

Thus the Bengal revolutionaries selected Raimangal, a place both navigable and unprotected, for landing the cargo of arms carried by the *Maverick* in India, and persuaded the Germans at Batavia to act accordingly mainly through the mediation of Martin *alias* Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. When every preparation was completed at Batavia, two telegrams were despatched by Atmaram from Bangkok, dated June 13 and June 17, 1915, addressed to B. K. Roy at 159 Bowbazar Street, Calcutta, and to Bhola Nath Chatterjee at 62,

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63. The File No. 921/1915 of the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.

64. The letter of Mr. Cleveland, Director of Criminal Intelligence, Delhi, to Mr. Hughes-Buller, the Inspector General of Police, Calcutta, dated Simla, July 31, 1915.

Beniatola Street, Calcutta, respectively. The telegrams were worded thus:

- (1) "Goods already despatched. Reach in 10 or 15 days" and
- (2) "Ivory and sandalwood already despatched. Reach in 10 days".<sup>65</sup>

On the receipt of this hopeful message from Bangkok the Bengal revolutionaries were up and doing in making the fullest use of the opportunities available. Meanwhile, Naren Bhattacharya also had reached Calcutta (June, 1915) to deliver the message personally and to play his assigned role in the contemplated rising with the help of German arms. As Jyotin Mukherjee was then in his Kaptipada hideout, the general plan of the rising was framed by Jadugopal Mukherjee in collaboration with Naren Bhattacharya, who on their turn were in constant communication with Jyotin Mukherjee for advice and direction. Kumud Nath Mukherjee, a Bangkok pleader, was also sent to Calcutta by the *Ghadr* conspirators in Siam, to convey a message as well as a purse. According to Mr. Ker, he set out on June 18, 1915, "with a sum of 2,200 ticals (about £165) supplied by Shiv Dayal Kapur" and arrived at Calcutta on July 3, 1915. He met the leaders including Jadugopal Mukherjee and Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, and left Calcutta for Batavia *en route* to Bangkok on July 24, 1915 to deliver to Helfferich "a message explaining the wants of the Indian party in the way of rifles and trained German help".<sup>66</sup>

65. The File No. 921/1915 of the I. B. Records, Govt. of West Bengal.

66. J. C. Ker: *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*. Kumud Nath Mukherjee was provided with a hundred-rupee note as his passage money out of the Batavian draft encashed by Amarendra Nath Chatterjee. He had met Martin at Batavia before he left for Bangkok. According to Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee, Kumud Nath sent a copy of the *Penang Times* describing the tragedy of the *Maverick* to the Calcutta leaders. The relevant cutting from this paper, sent by Jadugopal to Jyotin Mukherjee at Kaptipada, was discovered by the Police during their search at the Kaptipada house of Jyotin Mukherjee.

The general plan of upsurge followed the line of guerilla warfare and comprised the following items :

(1) Rising would take place in the villages where independence would be declared and tri-coloured flags hoisted.

(2) Starting from the villages, off Balasore, the Rising would proceed towards the coast of the Bay of Bengal and direct its attack on the military barracks at the Chandipur village.

(3) Looting of the armoury at Chakradharpur was the next target. For this a shop had already been opened at Chakradharpur by Bhola Nath Chatterjee under Jadugopal's direction.

(4) After inciting the Kols into revolt in the Singhbhum dtstrict, the Rising would proceed towards Midnapore and Birbhum districts where Satis Chakravarty was stationed to blow off the bridge on the Ajay river.

(5) The blowing off of the B. N. Railway was the next item for which Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee was entrusted.

(6) To attack the Fort William and to unfurl there the tri-coloured flag of "Free India" was perhaps the most important object of the Rising.<sup>67</sup>

In the preparatory stage of the armed rising a centre was opened at Khiderpore through the instrumentality of Durgacharan Bose and Ashutosh Ghose, both being school masters of Khiderpore. In that centre light-signalling, flag-signalling, telegraphy, code-making etc. were regularly practised for some time.<sup>68</sup> Even tri-coloured flags (Green, White and Yellow) and Khaki uniforms (shorts and shirts) were kept ready

67. Jadugopal Mukherjee: *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, pp 399-400. Also see the MSS of Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, p. 47.

68. N. K. Kar's MSS and the writer's interview with Jadugopal Mukherjee.

for the purpose. Dynamites were also secured for blowing off railway bridges.<sup>69</sup>

The *Sedition Committee Report* of 1918 also confirms the above plan of revolution outlined by the leaders. The Report states the following: "They considered that they were numerically strong enough to deal with the troops in Bengal, but they feared reinforcements from outside. With this idea in view they decided to hold up the three main railways into Bengal by blowing up the principal bridges. Jatindra was to deal with the Madras railway from Balasore, Bhola Nath Chatterjee was sent to Chakradharpur to take charge of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, while Satis Chakravarty was to go to Ajay and blow up the bridge on the East Indian Railway. Naren Chaudhuri and Phanindra Chakravarty were told off to go to Hatia where a force was to collect, first, to obtain control of the Eastern Bengal districts, and then to march on to Calcutta. The Calcutta party, under Naren Bhattacharji and Bipin Ganguli, were first to take possession of all the arms and arsenals around Calcutta, then to take Fort William, and afterwards to sack the town of Calcutta" (pp. 82-83).

Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee as the guiding spirit of the movement on the Bengal front laid special emphasis on the storming of the Fort William which stood as the symbol of alien domination. Although not unaware of the weaknesses of the Indian revolutionary movement, yet he was hopeful that the revolutionary upsurge once started would take its own course if there was a sustaining vitality in the movement.<sup>70</sup>

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69. According to Sri Jatindra Lochan Mitra, who was entrusted with the responsibility of making uniforms, about 1000 *Khaki* uniforms were got ready and distributed in four centres viz., Beadon Row, Abinas Mitra Lane, Khiderpore and Abinas Kabiraj Street. Benoy Datta was in charge of making flags.

70. Such feelings were expressed by Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee to Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, who visited Kaptipada from Calcutta twice during this period (June-July 1915), once accom-

In order to make a successful raid on the Fort William a preliminary attempt was made to seduce the troops at the Fort. One Mansha Singh was contacted for the purpose as mentioned by Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee. A corroboration of this point is also provided in contemporary police reports an extract from which is quoted below:

"An interesting off-shoot of the gun-running conspiracy was discovered in connection with this place, viz., an attempt to seduce sepoys of the Rajputs, then stationed at Fort William. Mansha Singh, an Indian officer of this regiment, was accosted by one Bharat Singh, who worked in a shop in Watganj Street, and was asked to join in a plot against the British Raj. Mansha Singh went to Khiderpore and was introduced to two Bengalis in an empty shop and was asked to go up to the Punjab and lecture to and seduce troops up there and to let them know about the expected arrival of arms and ammunition. Under instructions from his superiors to whom he reported this incident, this officer kept up the connection and introduced a havildar as a trustworthy fellow, and himself actually went up-country as a lecturer."<sup>71</sup>

Next, three places were selected for the distribution of smuggled arms after they would be received at Raimangal in the Sundarbans. These were Hatia (in Sandwip), Calcutta, and Balasore. From Hatia arms would be distributed in East Bengal where risings would be organized in collaboration with the Dacca Anusilan men; from Calcutta, they would be distributed in West and North Bengal, and from Balasore in Orissa.

A group of men was then sent to the Sundarbans

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panied by Jadugopal Mukherjee and again by Phanindra Nath Chakravarty, for discussion with Jyotindra Nath about the prospective Indian revolution.

71. The confidential booklet entitled *Connections With The Revolutionary Organization In Bihar & Orissa, 1906-1916* p. 62, Sec. 114.



where Jadugopal Mukherjee with the help of a local Zemindar arranged to unload the *Maverick*. These men included Aswini Lal Roy, Hari Kumar Chakravarty, Dr. Jatindra Nath Ghosal, Satis Chakravarty and Raja Jatin Roy of Nurnagar (Khulna). But with all this preparation the contemplated rising could not be carried through. In July, 1915 the revolutionaries in Calcutta received the disappointing news about the *Maverick* plot. It meant frustration of the very scheme of the second Indian revolution. But this was not the whole of the story. What added poignancy to the tragedy was the failure of the American Schooner *Henry S* to carry arms from Manila to Bengal under instruction from Heramba Lal Gupta who was in Chicago at that time. The Schooner with two German-Americans, Wehde and Boehm, on board cleared from Manila about July 14, 1915 with a cargo of 5000 revolvers but was detected by the Customs authorities whereupon it had to surrender the cargo. It had been arranged that the *Henry S* would first go to Bangkok where "500 revolvers were to be taken off" for use in the prospective revolt in the Siam-Burma border, and proceed with the rest towards Chittagong. Dharendra Nath Sen, an Indian revolutionary, was on board this Schooner. The principal object of H. L. Gupta was to arrange military training of Indians in Burma by Boehm who was a military man, and for this he arranged for the payment of \$1500 to him by the German Consulate in America.<sup>72</sup>

A further tragedy befell the Bengal revolutionaries when on August 7, 1915 the office of Harry & Sons at 41 Clive Street, Calcutta, was raided by the Police, resulting in the arrest of Hari Kumar Chakravarty as well as of his brother and his clerk. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya decided to revisit Java to try again

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72. The statement of George Paul Boehm, dated November 17, 1915. Also see Ker's *Political Trouble In India: 1907-1917*.

the fortune of the Bengal revolutionaries and sailed from India (August 15, 1915) accompanied by Phanindra Nath Chakravarty *alias* William Arthur Payne.<sup>73</sup> Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee was not much in favour of this move at this stage, for he believed that "the country's salvation is not from without but from within".<sup>74</sup> But this did not mean that he was blind to the importance of foreign assistance in the promotion of India's Independence. What he really wanted to drive home was the great truth that the building up of a big internal organization commensurate with the great task ahead was the first essential preliminary step to success. The organizational weaknesses of the Bengal revolutionaries did not pass unnoticed by the British Government of India whose attitude to the revolutionary organization is summed up in the following comment of Mr. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Delhi:

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73. This time Narendra Nath Bhattacharya received cold reception both from Theodore Helfferich of the Behn Meyers Company and the German Consul at Batavia. He therefore sent Phani Chakravarty to Shanghai to meet the German Consul-General, but his mission ended in failure due to his arrest there. Naren Bhattacharya, after trying his luck in the Far East for nearly a year went to San Francisco in June, 1916, about which the local *Daily News*, published from San Francisco, dated June 15, 1916, contained the following paragraph:

"When the Nippon Maru touched port today from Hongkong it carried a man of mystery. He is Chas. A. Martin, who despite his name is a Hindu and a high-caste Brahmin. Martin declared that he boarded the boat at a French-Indian port and that he is *en route* to Paris to study. Passengers however, declared that he did not board the ship at such a point, and believe him to be either a revolutionary leader or an emissary of the British Government."

M. N. Roy, referring to his landing at San Francisco in the summer of 1916, writes the following: "The next morning, newspapers carried the banner headline; 'Mysterious Alien Reaches America—Famous Brahmin Revolutionary or Dangerous German Spy'. I decamped from the hotel after a rush breakfast in my room and made for the nearby town of Palo Alto, the seat of the University of Stanford. There I made the acquaintance of Dhangopal Mukherjee who...advised me to wipe out the past and begin as a new man. Accordingly, the same evening, M. N. Roy was born in the campus of Stanford University" (*Memoirs*, p. 22).

74. N.K. Kar's MSS.

"The plan of sending arms, & c. to India must seem sound to the Germans although we probably see the practical difficulties against their being used against us more clearly than they do. The Indian revolutionaries with their tall talk would probably assure the Germans that if the arms could only be got near India they would do the rest and on this promise the Germans might think the scheme good enough. I do not wish to under-rate the Germans' sense but they have often shown that they understand the Indians not so well as we do".<sup>75</sup>

#### BALASORE FIGHT

The most thrilling episode of the attempted Indian rising centred round the Balasore fight in which Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee faced death like a true hero. The police got clues about Jyotindra Nath's stay at Kaptipada in course of the raid of Harry and Sons in Calcutta (August 7, 1915), revealing to them the existence of Universal Emporium at Balasore. This together with the decipher of the Madras telegram of Narendra Nath Bhatta 'arya to Jadugopal Mukherjee in early September, 1915 prompted the police to make a search of the Universal Emporium on September 5, 1915 under the command of Messrs Tegart, Denham and Bird. In course of this search "a suspicious letter was found on the floor signed 'Gopal' which Sailes professed to know nothing about, whereas enquiry showed that Gopal Babu was well-known in the locality as a friend of his who frequently stayed at his shop and that Sailes had also visited Gopal at Kaptipada in the hills of Mourbhanj State 35 miles from Balasore where he had land. Denham and Bird accompanied by the Collector of Balasore went to Kaptipada on the 6th instant and saw the Diwan of the State who showed them Gopal Babu's house about a mile from Kaptipada.

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75. The I. B. Records of the Government of West Bengal F. N. 921/1915.

The house was built round three sides of<sup>1</sup> a courtyard, the fourth side being composed of stakes firmly driven into the ground forming a high fence. A tree in the courtyard showed that it had been used as a target presumably for revolver shooting and there was a hole in the mud wall made by a bullet which had missed the tree. A thorough search of the house was made and all the papers were seized in the presence of the local Sub-Divisional Officer and the State Police".<sup>76</sup>

Before we go into the details of the Kaptipada search and the results ensuing from it, it is worth while to have a clear idea of what Kaptipada was in relation to the revolutionaries. Kedar Nath Chakravarty, father of Manindra Nath Chakravarty, was a Police Inspector and also a Diwan of Kaptipada, an estate under the bigger State of Mourbhanj. Some time afterwards Kedar Nath settled down at the village of Mahuldiha which he had received from the Raja of Kaptipada as "lakhiraj" previous to his dismissal from service in 1903. On the death of Kedar Nath (1911), his only son Manindra Nath inherited his father's property and began to live at Mahuldiha. About 1908 Devi Prasad Roy *alias* Khuro, an agent of the Hindustan Insurance Co., came to that place along with "one or two companions" to Mourbhanj and saw its Raja Ram Bhanj, son-in-law of Keshab Chandra Sen, for securing the lease of some land ostensibly for business purposes (but really to provide shelter to the revolutionaries), and the lease of the Sendei jungles in Kaptipada was talked of without much progress. Then Devi Prasad, connected with Manindra Nath as an intimate friend of his brother Girindra Nath and also belonging to the same village Dadpur, Nadia, went to Mahuldiha and put up with Manindra Nath for a few

76. Letter of R. Clarke, Police Commissioner, Calcutta, to Mr. Kerr, the Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, dated September 9, 1915.

days before he left. It was here that Nalini Kanta Kar, an absconder after Samsul Alum's murder, was sent with Gunin Ghose in 1910.<sup>77</sup>

Mahuldiha for its suitability for hiding and secret activities was again selected for absconder Jyotin Mukherjee who lived there along with Chittapriya from March, 1915, reinforced by Manoranjan and Niren in April, and by Jyotish Pal in August, 1915. Nalini Kanta Kar *alias* Gopal Roy, a supervising agent for Jyotindra Nath, also lived at Mahuldiha throughout the period save the few days he had to spend at Balasore or Calcutta. About the settlement of Jyotindra Nath at Mahuldiha the Police Reports state the following:

"Gopal Chandra Roy, however, turned up again in Mahuldiha in February, 1915 (actually March, 1915), bringing with him a man he introduced as Bhabataran Roy of Calcutta, and said they wanted to open a grocer's shop and cultivate land. Money was advanced to Manindra for the erection of a house on land they arranged to lease from him, in the bogus name of one Keshab Chandra Mukherjee. They then left (actually Bhabataran only left) the place, returning a fortnight later with one Ramananda Swami, who settled down there. Subsequently other houses were built and four other men passing under the names of Kalidas Roy, Sambhu Roy, Jogananda Roy and Probodh Roy came and settled there also. They all professed to be karmacharyas of Keshab Chandra Mukherjee, who, they alleged, had extensive business in London, which being dull on account of the war, had resulted in their being sent out to open shops and cultivate land at Kaptipada and other places, on an extensive scale. They purchased and took lease of land

77. N. K. Kar's MSS. It is here recorded that after he had spent a few months at Mahuldiha, he was there joined by Satis Sarkar. Nalini Kanta returned to Calcutta as an absconder probably at the end of 1910, while Satis Sarkar stayed on there until the withdrawal of the warrant in 1911.

in the neighbouring villages and also at Taldiha, 20 miles off. They were frequently visited by Gopal Roy, Bhabataran and one Ananda Mohan Roy, the first-named apparently supplying the money. Very little cultivation was done, most of the time being spent in wrestling and shooting".<sup>78</sup>

The same picture has also been presented to us by Sri Nalini Kanta Kar who further states that, after the news of the police raid at Harry & Sons had been flashed in the Calcutta newspapers, the Mahuldiha absconders, apprehending police search at Kaptipada, at once decided to brave the situation manfully and to die, if need be, by offering armed resistance to the enemies. They began patrolling the pathways of the village day and night and soon sent Nirendra and Jyotish to the second centre at Taldiha to lessen the concentration at the Mahuldiha camp.

On the night of September 6, 1915, Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee was informed by a local man of the approaching sound of elephants with the police party on their back towards the Kaptipada Dak Bungalow. Jyotin Mukherjee in a flash clearly saw through the whole game and hurriedly left with Chittapriya and Manoranjan for Taldiha that very night, thus eluding the grasp of the police party which raided his house the very next morning. Along with his followers he, however, returned to his Kaptipada house at night under cover of darkness, received some money from Manindra Nath,<sup>79</sup> and then proceeded to the Balasore

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78. Vide the confidential police report entitled *Connections With The Revolutionary Organisation In Bihar & Orissa, 1906-16*, p. 52, Sec. 94. Obviously Jyotin Mukherjee adopted the name of Ramananda Swami, and Chittapriya, Nirendra, Manoranjan and Jyotish assumed respectively the *aliases* of Kalidas, Sambhu, Jogananda and Probodh. Bhabataran and Ananda Roy were no other than Naren Bhattacharya and Phani Chakravarty respectively.

79. During this time as all funds had been exhausted, Nalini Kar was sent by Jyotin Mukherjee from Kaptipada to Calcutta to bring back some money. This incident took place about a week before the event of September 9, 1915.

station with the fixed resolve to die fighting with the enemies if the occasion so demanded. On reaching the station Jyotindra Nath and his party, however, changed their plan. They left the railway station and moved into a village close by. Tired, weary and exhausted, they crossed the river *Buri Balam* on the morning of September 9, 1915 with the help of a local man. The appearance of strange faces in the village naturally roused suspicion among the villagers who after gathering together put questions to them regarding their identity and began to chase them. At this stage the absconding party "produced revolvers and threatened the crowd, which fell back, but continued to follow the gang at a safe distance. One of the party then turned and fired two or three shots. As nothing happened, two of the bolder villagers drew closer, whereupon four of the party fired a volley killing the foremost and severely wounding the other". Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee and his party then moved away fast, crossed another small rivulet by swimming, and ultimately took defensive position behind a high ground in a paddy field, the Chasa-Khand or the scene of the historic Balasore fight.

Meanwhile intimation had been sent on behalf of the villagers to the police officials at Balasore, and on getting the information midway, one road-patrol Sub-Inspector, Chintamani Sahu by name, quickly appeared on the scene and mixed with the crowd in ragged dress as if he was a begger, and by crossing the rivulet he followed the absconders practically unnoticed. It was this man who showed the signal to the paddy field to the advancing police party from Balasore. "The District Magistrate arrived at the spot shortly after and then a party of armed police and the Sergeant of the Army Proof Department. The Sub-Inspector with the villagers had put up a white flag as a signal and thus the armed party soon located their quarry. They

marched out in open order across the paddy field, and were immediately fired on by the fugitives and then a regular fight ensued for some 15 or 20 minutes, at the end of which two of the Bengalis stood up in surrender ... it was found that one of them had been shot dead and two others were seriously wounded. Three Mauser pistols and an automatic Mauser pistol and a quantity of cartridges were recovered from them".<sup>80</sup> A more direct and detailed report of the actual fight is to be found in the following D. O. sent by the District Magistrate Kilby to the Police Commissioner at Calcutta:

"We have bagged the five Bengalis we were after. About 2 or 2-30 this afternoon Khuda Bux arrived at my Bungalow and told me that the five Bengalis had been spotted, that they had killed one villager and wounded another. We promptly got hold of some motor cars and proceeded to the scene of action. Sergeant Rutherford of the Proof Department went with us. We got 'khubar' of the Bengalis after we had crossed the River. We eventually found them ensconced in a small patch of jungle in the middle of a paddy field. I armed Rutherford with my volunteer rifle and took a sporting 303 myself and with armed constables we advanced in extended order. The Bengalis fired at us with Mauser pistols, but luckily hit no one. We then crawled through the paddy and fired at them. Rutherford did great execution, the constable also fired. After firing on both sides had gone on for some time, two men jumped up out of the bushes and held up their hands. We went up and found that one

80. Vide the confidential police report entitled *Connections With The Revolutionary Organization In Bihar & Orissa, 1906-16* (p. 49, Sec. 88), from which some relevant passages have been quoted by Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his *History Of The Freedom Movement In India*, Vol. II, pp. 442-443.

Also see Home (Poll.) Proceedings of the Government of India, Nos. 46-61, Part A, October, 1915 for Mr. Denham's and Mr. Ryland's Reports on the Balasore affray.



man had been shot dead and two others badly wounded. The wounded men have been taken to the Hospital and are being attended to by the Civil Surgeon, and are being watched by a Police guard to prevent communication with the outside world. The two unwounded men are in the thana lock-up under a charge of murder . . . One more point; while I had gone off to get beds to carry off the wounded, one of the accused tried to bribe a Head Constable to dig up a letter which the party had buried under a tree near a tank. Rutherford overheard this part of the conversation and told Khuda Bux, who told the Head Constable to agree. Search will be made for this letter. Will you communicate the contents of this to Denham and get him to come here at once".<sup>81</sup> Needless to say, the man who died on the spot was Chittapriya, the wounded men brought to the Balasore hospital were Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee and Jyotish Pal, and the men put in the police lock-up on charge of murder were Manoranjan and Nirendra. Jyotindra Nath breathed his last in hospital on September 10, 1915, and Manoranjan and Niren faced death by hanging. Jyotish Pal who was under the sentence of transportation of life later turned mad and died in the Berhampore jail. The life's mission of Jyotindra Nath was to see the Bengalis fighting with arms with their enemies for the freedom of their soil, and his death in action put the divine seal on his mission. Great and magnificent in life, he appeared greater and more magnificent in death, standing out before his countrymen as the very symbol of the unconquerable spirit of Youth.

81. The D. O. dated September 9, 1915 from the Magistrate of Balasore to the Police Commissioner, Calcutta, as preserved in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal. The police party comprised the District Magistrate of Balasore, the D. I. G. of Bihar Sergeant Rutherford of the Proof Department of Chandipur, and Khuda Bux, the Police Commr.

## FUNDS FOR THE ABSCONDERS

After the death of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee the leadership in the revolutionary camp was assumed by Jadugopal Mukherjee and Atul Krishna Ghose. Difficult days now came upon the revolutionaries most of whom were put under arrest either under the Defence of India Act or deported under Regulation III of 1818 or thrown out of their homes as political absconders (1915-16). At this critical juncture in the nation's life that French colony in Bengal, Chandernagore, which was only a few miles off from Calcutta, offered a safe shelter to the political exiles which, in the words of Mr. Tegart, "provides, in its present state, an Alsatia for revolutionary fugitives and is an active centre of plots directed towards the subversion of British rule in India".<sup>82</sup>

Several houses were hired at Chandernagore at this stage for the safe dwelling of the revolutionaries, and in order to give the semblance of family life to these houses two *pishimas* were also manufactured. They were called *Chota Pishima* and *Bara Pishima* of the revolutionaries; the former was related to Amarendra Nath Chatterjee while the latter belonged to the village of Bhola Nath Chatterjee, and both of them dedicated themselves to the revolutionary cause. Ever since 1912 the Anusilan Samiti had been in constant contact with Chandernagore, and during this period some of their workers, including Amrita Lal Sarkar, began to live in that French colony. After Nalini Kanta Ghose's flight from the Dalanda House (now 247 Lower Circular Road, Calcutta) along with Probodh Biswas on December 23, 1916 and their refuge at Chandernagore, a sincere attempt was made by the revolutionaries for

82. Mr. Tegart's lengthy note (pp. 16) on *The Situation In Chandernagore*, dated March 10, 1917. This note was written by Mr. Tegart after his Chandernagore search conducted on December 1, 1916.

the amalgamation of the Anusilan Samiti with the Western Bengal Party of Tegar's description. Thanks to Jadugopal Mukherjee and Satis Chakravarty, on the one hand, and Nalini Kanta Ghose and Vinayak Rao Kaple, on the other, a practical amalgamation between the Eastern and Western Bengal parties was accomplished, and the united front thus forged did not break up until the declaration of amnesty in December, 1919.<sup>83</sup>

During this period the revolutionaries of Bengal were put to severe financial strain mainly because of the stoppage of the flow of German purse and the close-down of the *Sramajibi Samabaya* in September, 1915. As the number of absconders increased, the shortage of funds even for their bare maintenance became more palpable, thus creating a new problem for the revolutionaries. In the background of this acute financial crisis the Shibpur dacoity in the Nadia district (September 30, 1915) was planned and executed under the leadership of Narendra Nath Ghose Choudhury of the Barisal party in collaboration with the North Bengal group. The site was selected by Naren Sarkar of North Bengal, and the 'action' was carried out by a group of men including Satin Sen, Bejoy Mitra, Radhika Ganguli, Sanukul Chatterjee, Satyen Bose, Bhupen Ghose, Suren Biswas, Nikhil Guha Roy (Idilpur), Haren Kavyatirtha and others. The party reached their destination at dead of night by rowing a big boat from Krishnagore, but after successful operation in the house of one Krista Biswas while they were escaping with their booty, they were chased by the villagers at day break, which resulted in their encounter with the police and the subsequent arrests of a number of them including Naren Ghose Choudhury.<sup>84</sup> Accord-

83. Jadugopal Mukherjee: *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, p. 434.

84. The unpublished *Smriti-Katha* of Sri Manoranjan Gupta. Sri Gupta was in the intimate knowledge of the plan of the 'dacoity'.

ing to the Nixon Report, a sum of Rs. 20,700 was looted on this occasion by the *bhadralog* dacoits who, armed with guns and Mausers, killed one constable and three persons, while wounding eleven more. But, unfortunately, the booty did not come to any use of the revolutionaries as it had to be hidden underground during their escape and could not later be recovered by them. Besides this, three important political dacoities were committed in Calcutta in 1915 by the Barisal, Sylhet and Mymensingh revolutionary groups in which Manoranjan Gupta, Deben Choudhury, and Sudhin Bose and Durga Prasanna Roy took prominent part respectively. The dacoities above mentioned refer to the raids conducted (1) at 16 Kansaripara Road, Bhowanipore, on November 6, 1915, the loot amounting to Rs. 15,000; (2) at 80|1 Cornwallis Street, on November 17, 1915, the loot amounting to Rs. 800; and (3) at the Corporation Street on December 2, 1915, the loot amounting to Rs. 25,000.<sup>85</sup>

Excepting the first which was committed at midnight, the second and the third dacoities were taxi-raids of the Garden Reach and Beliaghata type conducted in broad day-light. Apart from these incidents, two important murders were also committed by these revolutionary groups in Calcutta. The first relates to the murder of Sub-Inspector Girindra Nath Banerjee while sitting in a conference with Satis Banerjee and two others at 99, Masjidbari Street, on October 21, 1915, and the second to that of Sub-Inspector Madhusudan Bhattacharya at College Street, opposite to the Calcutta Medical College, on January 16, 1916. In connection with the murder of Girindra Nath

and was awaiting the return of some of the members of the party at a house at Nabadwip selected for the purpose where Tribeni Sur was living with his family.

85. *Index To Notes On Outrages*, Vol. VIII, compiled by Mr. J. C. Nixon, I.C.S., in 1917. Also see the I.B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal, File No. 755/17, for the details of the incidents.

Banerjee it requires to be noted that the real target of the revolutionaries was Inspector Satis Banerjee who had then been investigating the Shibpur dacoity case and who, like Basanta Chatterjee, had already earned notoriety to the revolutionaries. These incidents demonstrate beyond doubt that even the failures of Balasore and Shibpur had not been able to extinguish the revolutionary fire in Bengal.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE ABSCONDER'S

Since September, 1915, with new responsibilities thrust upon the shoulders of the revolutionaries, Atul Krishna Ghose set himself earnestly to the work of party re-organization and Jadugopal Mukherjee strenuously strove to forge renewed links with the foreign countries. As no news from Martin and Payne (i.e., Naren Bhattacharya and Phani Chakravarty) was forthcoming, Jadugopal Mukherjee during his abscondage at Chandernagore (September, 1915-January, 1916) sent Bhola Nath Chatterjee and Benoy Bhusan Datta as emissaries with code names and signals to the neutral Portuguese settlement at Goa (December 17, 1915) to maintain communication with Naren Bhattacharya then at Batavia. Another messenger Bhupati Majumdar was also sent for America via Singapore (December, 1915) to establish contact with the Indian revolutionaries in the U.S.A.<sup>86</sup> In 1916,

86. The interception by the British Government of a code-message from Goa to Batavia, dated December 27 1915, containing the words "How doing. No news. Very anxious. B. Chatterton" led to the arrests of Benoy Datta and Bhola Chatterjee at Panjim. With reference to this Mr. J. C. Ker, the P. A. to the Director of Criminal Intelligence for many years, has given us the following information: "Chatterjee was caught in the act of trying to throw out through the tiles at the back of the house a bundle of papers which included a draft of the telegram and a note of what it cost... Chatterjee and Dutt made statements admitting their part in the German plot; the statement of the former was only a brief admission and he promised to give further details, but before doing so, on the night of January 27th, 1916, he committed suicide in the Poona jail where he was confined."

Sailen Ghose, another member of the Western Bengal Party, fled to America after a warrant of arrest had been issued against him. While living in that country he cultivated friendship with Miss Agnes Smedley, that American lady who for her active support to the cause of Indian revolution had to suffer imprisonment for four years at the hands of the American Government. According to the report published in the *New York World* (March 19, 1918), Sailen Ghose and Miss Smedley "are said to have sent messages to Trotzky and to the Brazilian Government, urging support for a republic in India". "In the appeal to Trotzky", reported the said newspaper, "written on the diplomatic papers of the India Nationalist Party, dated Tagore Castle, Calcutta, December 12, 1917, was this: "The hand of British imperialism is long enough to have several scores of Indian revolutionists arrested in the United States on the pretext of violating the neutrality of the United States of America by starting a military enterprise from the United States of America to overthrow British rule in India.

"These Indian revolutionists are threatened with deportation from the United States of America so that British imperialism will have a fair chance of taking vengeance on its enemies by sending them to the gallows'."

Sailen Ghose made common cause also with the Irish Nationalist leader Eamon De Valera who had fled to the U.S.A. after escaping from Lincoln Jail in February, 1919 and raised a loan of six million dollars for Irish Republican Government. He also joined hands with George Freeman, that Irish-American gentleman working for many years for the *Gaelic American* and *Free Hindusthan*<sup>87</sup>, and began to utilise

Sri Bhupati Majumdar, after he had left, was also arrested on the Pacific near the Indonesian Island.

87. The Home Political Proceedings of the Govt. of India, February

the Irish Nationalist journal (the *Gaelic American*) for political propaganda in favour of Indian Independence.<sup>88</sup>

After the arrests of Benoy Bhushan Datta and Bhola Nath Chatterjee, a third messenger was sent by Jadugopal Mukherjee to the Far East to establish contact with Naren Bhattacharya in Java, and he was Santipada Mukherjee *alias* Niazullah Khan who came from Calcutta to China *via* Java in 1916. But the mounting difficulties before him "gradually wore him down and led him to throw up the sponge. Excepting Das and Mukherjee", writes Mr. Petrie, "the Far East was not visited during 1917 by any itinerant conspirator of the first rank".<sup>89</sup>

During this period Indian revolutionaries in the Far East, Rash Behari Bose and Narendra Nath Bhattacharya in particular, made strenuous attempts at arranging fresh shipment of arms to India with the help of the German Consulates in this sector. About this move the *Sedition Committee Report* (pp. 84-85) writes the following:

"There is reason to believe that, when the scheme connected with the *Maverick* failed, the German Consul-General at Shanghai arranged to send two other ships with arms to the Bay of Bengal, one to Rai Mangal and the other to Balasore. The first was to carry 20,000 rifles, 8,000,000 cartridges, 2,000 pistols and hand grenades and explosives and two lakhs of rupees, the other was to carry 10,000 rifles, a million cartridges and grenades and explosives. 'Martin', however, pointed out to the German Consul at Batavia that Rai Mangal was no longer a safe landing-place and sug-

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1916 No 201: Correspondence from the India Office on the subject of the activities of Indian Revolutionaries in the U.S.A.

88. Jadugopal Mukherjee: *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti*, p. 430

89. The Report on Indian Sedition in the Far East in 1917 by Mr. D. Petrie deputed as Intelligence Officer of the Govt. of India in the Far East in 1916. 'Das' here referred to is no other than Tarak Nath Das who had visited China and Japan in 1917.

gested Hatia was better. The proposed change of place was discussed with Helfferich and eventually the following plan was evolved:

"The steamer for Hatia was to come direct from Shanghai and arrive about the end of December. The ship for Balasore was to be a German steamer lying in a Dutch port and was to pick up a cargo at sea. A third steamer, also a war-bound German vessel, was to sail to the Andamans shipping a cargo of arms at sea and raid Port Blair, pick up anarchists, convicts and men of the mutinous Singapore regiment, who it was thought were interned there, and then proceed to Rangoon and raid it. To assist the conspirators in Bengal a Chinaman was sent by Helfferich with 66,000 guilders and a letter to be delivered to a Bengali at Penang or to one of two addresses in Calcutta: he never delivered his message for he was arrested at Singapore with the money on his person."

From the available sources it appears that while the venture of the first two ships was connected with the work of Rash Behari Bose, the third move was associated with that of Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. In 1943 Rash Behari in his statement entitled *Our Struggle* recalled his earlier revolutionary activities and stated: "With the aid of Germany I was able to send home two ship-loads of arms and ammunition but unfortunately they were confiscated before reaching India". It has already been shown (pp. 141-42) that Rash Behari came into close touch with the German Consul-General at Shanghai and lived in the house of a German named Neilson, and that in collaboration with Neilson he sent two Chinese to India with arms, who were, however, arrested in October, 1915. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya did not go to Shanghai at this stage as revealed in his *Memoirs*. But during his second trip to Java (August, 1915) he made fresh attempts to send ships to India *via* the Andamans, about which his own



version was this: "I made yet another attempt to bring help overseas from Indonesia. The plan was to use the German ships interned in a port at the northern tip of Sumatra, to storm the Andaman Islands and free and arm the prisoners there, and land the army of liberation on the Orissa coast".<sup>90</sup>

These efforts did not, however, materialise. Having failed in his mission, Martin tried to send arms through overland routes into Assam and even despatched an emissary from Japan, Bhupati Ghose by name, who communicated the message to Jadugopal Mukherjee at Mymensingh in 1916. Bhupati Ghose also carried some message from Rash Behari Bose in Japan.<sup>91</sup> It should also be noted in this connection that during 1915-16 political absconders like Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, Atul Krishna Ghose, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Nalini Kanta Kar, Satis Chakravarty, Bejoy Chakravarty *alias* Vidyabinode, Manmatha Nath Biswas etc. had all assembled by this time in Chandernagore, which then grew into the greatest stronghold of the revolutionaries for their future activities. Following the police search in Chandernagore in February, 1916 Jadugopal Mukherjee and Nalini Kanta Kar left that place, and having toured through Calcutta, Barisal, Mymensingh and Dacca (February-December, 1916) they went along with Kamini Mohan Ghose (father of Surendra Mohan Ghose) and a few young men of Mymensingh, viz., Satis Thakur, Nagen Chakravarty, Khitish Bose, Khitish Choudhury etc. to the Assam-Bhutan border and lived there until the beginning of 1917 in futile expectation of the arrival of foreign arms. Their remotest base was set up in Bhutan. Throughout this period the link of communication

90. Vide Rash Behari Bose's statement entitled "Our Struggle" as incorporated in *Rash Behari Basu: His Struggle For India's Independence* (p. 222) as well as M. N. Roy's *Memoirs* (p. 4).

91. The writer's interview with Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee.

between them and their Chandernagore headquarters was retained by Nalini Kanta Kar who occasionally visited that place.

Meanwhile, Amar Chatterjee, Atul Ghose and Satis Chakravarty who were left behind at Chandernagore took shelter at two houses in Salkia, Howrah. On August 4, 1916 when one of those houses was surrounded by the police, Atul Ghose and Satis Chakravarty fled in a hurry while two other inmates, Jugal Kishore Datta and Sudhir Shome, offered armed resistance before they could be overpowered by the police. Referring to Satis Chakravarty who was placed a sentry on the roof, Mr. Tegart writes: "This fact made it particularly impossible for us to surround the house without being discovered, and the jungle at the back of the house, coupled with the darkness and the subsequent rain, greatly facilitated the escape of Satis Chakravarty and Atul Ghose".<sup>92</sup>

Sometime after the flight of Nalini Kanta Ghose (the Anusilan Samiti leader) and Probodh Biswas from the Dalanda House to Chandernagore (December, 1916) talks for fresh 'actions' were set afoot between the Anusilan Samiti men and the followers of Jyotin Mukherjee. Jadugopal Mukherjee and Nalini Kanta Kar were called back to Chandernagore from Assam by Atul Ghose and Amar Chatterjee. While conferences were still in progress, an important search by the British Indian police was conducted at numerous houses in Chandernagore on April 21, 1917. The absconders were once again scattered far and wide. Jadugopal Mukherjee and Nalini Kar fled to Assam while Amar Chatterjee followed Nalini Ghose to Gauhati and stayed there with the Anusilan Samiti men until the Gauhati fight of January, 1918. Throughout this period Atul Ghose remained in Chandernagore

92. Mr. Tegart's Note on Howrah Search, dated 5.8.1916,

and kept up secret contacts with the party members. After some time Jadugopal Mukherjee and Nalini Kanta Kar successively went to Purnea, Daijuri (in Midnapore) and Balarampore (in Purulia District) and being joined by Manmatha Nath Biswas from Chandernagore at Purnea, lived absconding lives till September, 1921<sup>93</sup> when Moti Lal Roy of Chandernagore sent to them the call of release after the announcement of the Royal Proclamation made in December, 1919.

Among the other activities of the revolutionaries during 1916-17 may be mentioned the publication of seditious leaflets, both in English and Bengali, exhorting the people to carry on their struggle until Independence was achieved. Of these leaflets, the undermentioned ones were the most important:

- (1) From the Office of the Director General, Administration Department: Administration Report;
- (2) From the Office of the Director General, Indian Revolution Vigilance Deptt., Bengal Branch, to the Public in General and Members of Our Camp;
- (3) A Manifesto of the Indian National Party;
- (4) From Indian National Defence Camp to our Patriotic Countrymen: Declaration of Our Policy;
- (5) From the Secretary, Home Department, Indian Revolutionary Committee Camp to the Princes and People of India;
- (6) *Jugantar* and *Sandhya* leaflets in Bengali.

These leaflets were widely distributed in Bengal and beyond and sent even to such persons as C. Y. Chintamani (Allahabad), Pandit Jagat Narain Vakil (Lucknow), Raja of Mahmudabad (Mahmudabad), Mr. Mahajani (Akola), Annie Besant (Adyar,

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93. Jadugopal Mukherjee, Nalini Kanta Kar and Manmatha Nath Biswas spent a short period in Purnea and Daijuri, and lived for four years in Balarampore. During the entire period they wore Mahomedan dresses and were known in Balarampore as Dr. Samuiddin, Gaffur and Mia Bhai respectively.

Madras), A. K. Fazlal Haq (Bengal) under cover of a big envelope with cover print of 'On His Majesty's Service' and bearing the Dharmatala postmark.<sup>94</sup> Sri Jatindra Lochon Mitra, who was at that time in charge of such despatches, has informed the writer that the big envelopes for the despatch of the leaflets were specially printed with cover print of 'On His Majesty's Service' and the despatcher's name in the corner, e.g., "Despatcher, Writers' Building", "From Registrar, High Court, Calcutta", "Sun Life Insurance Co.", "Alliance Bank of Simla", "Port Commissioners, Calcutta" etc. These were generally posted in the General Post-Office, Calcutta.

The revolutionaries also used in their transactions a seal, the motif of which was taken from the "Catalogue of Maps, published by the Survey of India, 1912". Mr. Tegart in course of his search in Chander-nagore (December 1, 1916) discovered two well-cut brass seals of the revolutionary camp, which, he states, "by now are familiar to us, having appeared on several letters issued by the revolutionary party". Mr. Cleveland in his Weekly Report dated December 16, 1916 has also referred to these two brass seals of the revolutionary camp, discovered at Chandernagore, as "corresponding to the impressions which have appeared on letters and notifications purporting to be issued by the revolutionary party".<sup>95</sup>

It is worth remembering in this connection that many of these leaflets were issued in the name of the shadow cabinet of the revolutionaries, which then

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94. The File No. 1805/1917 of the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.

95. The seals were made first in 1913 under the direction of Sri Jatindra Lochon Mitra, an ex-member of the Calcutta Anusilan Samiti and later a follower of Jyotindra Nath Mukherjee. Altogether three seals, two brass and one steel, were made, the dice of the steel seal being made from the Calcutta mint with the help of goldsmith Nilmoni Roy. The design of the seal is still to be found in the pages of the *Sedition Committee Report* (p. 74).

existed in their imagination only. The leaflets were so written as to give the public an impression as if they were the directives of an actual revolutionary Government functioning independently of alien control and working from behind the public scene.<sup>96</sup> In 1917, when the British Government were trying to rally the Indian nationalists to the Crown by their customary repression-*cum*-conciliation policy, the revolutionaries warned the countrymen against being trapped by the lures of the Commissions which Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, was then dangling before their eyes.

In this background, the revolutionary leaflet addressed to the Princes and People of India (1917) deserves special notice. It showed up the hollowness of bureaucratic professions, particularly the Montagu Mission, and exhorted the people to preserve their faith intact in the destiny of their mission. The aforesaid leaflet further affirmed: "Let there be no mistake about one central and cardinal fact. We are out after Independence, Independence *Sans Phrase*, Independence without qualification and reservation and Independence in the fullest and completest sense of the word. It is irreconcilable with our traditions and our faith that India should be an unequal partner in any Federation of Nations of which England shall still be the mistress."

The revolutionary workers responsible for the above leaflets also sent a letter to the American President Woodrow Wilson through Barrister Subramaniya Aiyar during the war period, drawing his attention to India's case for Independence and requesting him to help the legitimate cause of India in a true democratic spirit.

It is thus evident that notwithstanding failures and reverses coupled with increasing bureaucratic re-

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96. The leaflet entitled *Director General, Administration Deptt: Administration Report* published by the Bengal revolutionaries during the First World War.

pression, the political activities of the Bengal revolutionaries did not cease altogether. But it must be admitted at the same time that the revolutionary movement in India was now flagging on all fronts mainly due to the vigorous pursuit of repression-*cum*-conciliation policy by the Government. Meanwhile, the international background of India's national movement was undergoing rapid changes unfavourably for the Indian revolutionaries. The entry of the U. S. A. in the World War I in 1917 on the side of the Anglo-French Powers followed by the military reverses of Germany produced very adverse effects on India's revolutionary activities, particularly in the U. S. A. Under the new political setting the Jugantar absconders were compelled to wind up their activities in India without bending their neck in servility to authority. Referring to them Mr. Dixon, the Bengal D. I. G., stated (May 25, 1920): "A small but dangerous band of Jugantar absconders still at large considered capitulation as a bluff, but finally decided against it. Their cry had all along been 'let us get our men back', but they were as disillusioned as disappointed at the number of deserters from the fold".<sup>97</sup>

97. File No. 189/1920 in the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal.

## APPENDIX I

### THE ATTONNATI SAMITI AND THE MUKTI SANGHA: THEIR ROLE IN THE MURDER OF NANDA LAL BANERJEE

Founded about 1897 at the Khelat Chandra Institution in Wellington Square, Calcutta, the Attonnati Samiti was at first chiefly concerned with mental and moral culture of the Bengali youths; but shortly afterwards physical culture came to occupy the most prominent place in its scheme of work. In the nineteenth century, the natives of India were very often subjected to unmerited oppression and humiliation, particularly at railway stations, at the hands of the *Feringhis*. As the nation was not yet dead, a natural reaction soon set in in order to counter this disgraceful state of affairs. Both Bankim Chandra and Vivekananda had adumbrated the cult of *Shakti Yoga* as the first step to the revival of our manhood. With a view to organizing self-defence against the *Feringhi* oppression and other forms of 'protected hooliganism' of the alien bureaucracy, the Attonnati Samiti was brought into being. Among the early workers of the Samiti may be counted such names as Satis Mukherjee (different from Satis Mukherjee of the Dawn Society), Nibaran Bhattacharya, Harish Sikdar, Tinkari De, Indra Nandy, Bhubaneswar Sen, Rajmohon Das, Probhas De, many of whom afterwards won distinction as scholars and educationists. Satis Mukherjee later became the Principal of the Chittagong College, Nibaran Bhattacharya Professor of Physiology in the Presidency College, Tinkari De Professor of Chemistry in the Bangabasi College, Probhas De Professor of English in the Coochbihar Victoria College and also in Ripon College. After some time the Samiti was enlarged by the joining of Bipin Behari Ganguli, Anukul Chandra Mukherjee, Girindra Nath Banerjee, Ashu Chakravarty, Aresh Mukherjee, Ranen Ganguli, Bhujanga Dhar, Krishna Pada Mukherjee, Ahindra Nath Chatterjee, Hira Lal Chatterjee and others. Physical training was imparted to its members every day. Monsieur Lord, a French, was the boxing teacher, in the

club. As the Samiti was steadily growing in size and activities, it had to be shifted to the Khelat Chandra Branch Institution at Bowbazar. By 1906-07 when Sri Satis De, brother of Tinkari De, enrolled himself as a member, the Samiti had already been functioning at Bowbazar where the senior members (Ashu Chakravarty, Probhas De, Rajmohon Das, Bipin Ganguli, Asesh Mukherjee, Bhujanga Bhusan Dhar and Indra Nath Nandy) gave instruction in lathi-play, sword-play, boxing, wrestling, swimming etc. to the junior members of the Samiti. Besides physical exercises which were held daily, Sunday was specially meant for study and discussion in which all the members had to participate. Mazzini, Garibaldi, Pratap Singh, Plutarch's *Lives* of great men and similar themes pertaining to freedom's fight of different nations were taken up for discussion, while Seeley's famous book, *Expansion of England*, was taken up for critical assessment. Side by side with this physical and intellectual culture, the Samiti also tried to foster among its members the spirit of self-discipline and devotion to duty, and other moral virtues. The Gita ideal of *Nishkama Karma* or selfless work was constantly dinned into the ears of its members. The works of Vivekananda were also eagerly read in the *milieu* of the Samiti.

With the commencement of the Swadeshi Movement in 1905 which rapidly developed into a national struggle for Independence, the Attonnati Samiti came forward to play its destined role in the movement. In 1907, when Mahomedan *julum* in Jamalpore (Mymensingh district) was rampant, the Samiti sent out its armed emissaries for the protection of the hearth and home of the Hindus. The police took exception to this measure. Bipin Behari Ganguli and Indra Nath Nandy were bound down under Sec. 109 Cr. P. C.<sup>1</sup>

At about the same time the Samiti formed an inner circle which secretly began to cultivate contact with the Manicktola band of revolutionaries. This inner group had little faith in India's salvation by peaceful and constitutional means; on the contrary, they believed in the efficacy of triumph through terror. The outer body of the Samiti worked openly among the public, while the inner body in the subterranean channel without the

1. See the I. B. Records of the Govt. of West Bengal F. N. 239 of 1915. Also see the statement by Indra Nath Nandy as appended to Dr. B. N. Datta's *Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinatar Itihas*.



knowledge of the outer body. During the years 1905-10, the Samiti, in the background of the mounting bureaucratic repression, struck its roots deep into the country and spread out its branches in different directions, one at the Malanga Lane run by Anukul Mukherjee, Girin Banerjee, Kalidas Bose etc., one at Taltola Lane led by Biman Ghose, one at Bhowanipur led by Srish Roy and Bankim Roy, another at Alambazar, Baranagore, conducted by Khagen Chatterjee and Parbati Mukherjee, and still another at Konnagar, Howrah, by Nibaran Mitra. Bipin Ganguli, it needs be emphasized, was the central figure in all the branches,<sup>2</sup> of which the Malanga branch in particular concentrated itself on the collection of arms and violent activities.

In 1907, the anniversary of the Attonnati Samiti was held in the big compound of the Khelat Chandra Branch Institution at Bowbazar under the chairmanship of Barrister Jogesh Chandra Choudhury. *Bande Mataram* was sung as the national anthem, and physical exercises such as jiu-jitsu, lathi-play, boxing, big lathi drill etc. were displayed by the Samiti members. Another important function was the *Birastami utsab* celebrated in the Astami Puja day at the Samiti premises under the presidentship of Sarala Devi Choudhurani. Demonstrations of boxing, wrestling, lathi-play, sword play etc. were held by the Samiti boys. About this time the Attonnati Samiti celebrated also the *Sivaji utsab* in the premises of Raja Subodh Chandra Mallick at 12, Wellington Square and demonstrated many feats of physical exercises. A Zemindar of Midnapore presided over the function.

Probably in 1909, the Attonnati Samiti was again shifted from the Khelat Chandra Branch Institution to 166, Bowbazar Street (now the Basumati Sahitya Mandir), the very premises where the National College was located at that time. In the premises of this building the students of the National College celebrated the Durga Puja. While offering their *anjalis* to the goddess a few of the Attonnati Samiti boys cut their breast with

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2. Information about the genesis and early history of the Attonnati Samiti has been derived by the writer from Sri Satis De and Sri Ranen Ganguli. Also see an article on the history of the Attonnati revolutionary society by Satis De as published in the monthly *Basumati, Sravan*, 1371 B. S. as well as Satis De's book entitled *Nishkanga*. Incidentally it may be noted here that Srish Roy and Bankim Roy were the nephews of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee.

knives, besmeared the *bilwapatras* with their blood and dedicated them with vows of self-sacrifice in the cause of the country to the feet of the goddess. Sri Satis De was one of those who took part in this self-dedicating ceremony.

By this time a critical period had set in in the life of the Samiti. As an aftermath of the Muzaffarpur bomb outrage not merely the Manicktola Garden House was thoroughly ransacked and its important leaders, including Indra Nandy of the Attonnati Samiti, imprisoned, but other important samitis of the two Bengals were also proclaimed illegal and their leaders were either sent to prison or deported by the repressive Acts of the Government. As the repressive measures were mounting day by day, the Attonnati Samiti cut down its activities until it disbanded itself outwardly by the beginning of 1910. What was then left of the Samiti was its secret scheme of action from behind the gaze of the public or the agents of the alien bureaucracy.

## II

The Mukti Sangha popularly known as the Bengal Volunteers (a name which it acquired after 1920) was originally brought into being at Dacca as a gymnasium by a group of young men led by Sri Hem Chandra Ghose as early as 1902. Its roots may be traced to a foot-ball association called the Volunteer Club, organized by Hem Ghose in 1896-97, to which also belonged Ullaskar Datta, son of Prof. Dwijadas Datta of the Dacca College. Deeply impressed by his contact with Swami Vivekananda who had been to Dacca for a fortnight in 1901 for having a dip in the Brahmaputra at Langalbandh on the day of the *Chaitra Sankranti* and also to see the house of Sadhu Nag Mahasay at Deobhog in Narayan-ganj, Hem Ghose shortly afterwards collected a band of young men and inspired them with the ideal of the Swamiji. The sayings of Swami Vivekananda that no big work can be accomplished by cheating or forgery and that a country under foreign yoke has no religion left deep impression on his youthful mind. Thus under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, Hem Ghose organized a society, Mukti Sangha by name, which was wedded to the cult of driving out the British from India by any means whatsoever. Among its early members may be

mentioned Haridas Datta, Rajendra Guha, Srish Pal *alias* Naren, Surendra Bardhan (later a medical practitioner and political organizer in Rangpur), Nillohit Das Gupta, Master Alimuddin Mian, Sailen Ghosh *alias* Rabi Ghose, Suresh Roy *alias* Haridas Roy, Bibhuti Bose, Prafulla Guha and others. The name Mukti Sangha was given to the society at its opening ceremony by Upadhyay Brahmabandhab who visited Dacca in 1902. On that occasion Upadhyay delivered a short speech in Bengali emphasising before the audience that their first duty was to deliver the country from foreign yoke, and that that was their only religion. The members of the Sangha devoted themselves to study and discussion as well as to physical exercises. Hem Ghose, Haridas Datta, Master Alimuddin, Rajen Guha had their training in physical exercises at the hands of Paresb Nath Ghose and Shyama Kanta Banerjee, the two renowned athletes of Bengal of the time.<sup>3</sup>

The objects of the Mukti Sangha, at first somewhat vague and ill-defined, gradually became clear and precise after Hem Ghose's contact with the Dacca Anusilan Samiti (November, 1905) through Pulin Das and Naren Sen, the former being his elder brother's class-mate and the latter his own. Through the instrumentality of Ullaskar Datta Hem Ghose cultivated contact with Barin Ghose also as early as 1903.

The two major acts of the Mukti Sangha during 1902-08 were the suppression of hooliganism at the railway stations in the Dacca district and a showdown with the Mahomedans on the Nawabpur Road on the day of Lord Curzon's arrival at Dacca (December, 1904) to advocate the cause of Bengal Partition among the people. In the former act the party comprising Hem Ghose, Haridas Datta, Nillohit Das Gupta, Prafulla Guha etc. often patrolled the railway stations armed with lathis and swords and had frequent encounters with the hooligans, as a result of which Hem Ghose had to live in the Thana lock-up as many as seventeen or eighteen times during this period. Even a police surveillance was instituted over him in 1908 under the order of Mr. Salkeld, the District Magistrate of Dacca.

3. Facts about the origin and development of the Mukti Sangha have been gleaned by the writer from Sri Hem Chandra Ghose and Sri Haridas Datta.

The second incident centred round a quarrel between the Hindus and the Mahomedans on the question of fastening some festoons by the Hindus bearing the following slogans: "Long Live Curzon", "Save Us From Separation", "Pray Do Not Divide Bengal" etc. Sri Hem Ghose has informed the writer that on the day previous to Lord Curzon's arrival at Dacca the volunteers of the Mukti Sangha, under the advice of Ananda Chandra Roy and under the leadership of Paresh Nath Ghose, had fastened several festoons on the Nawabpur Road leading to the Nawab's house, Asanmanzil. But at the instigation of Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, his followers covered those festoons with *salu* cloth at night. As soon as the news reached Hem Ghose and his party, they hastened to the spot with lathis and swords, and a free fight ensued between the two camps which continued till the next morning when Lord Curzon was proceeding through that very route.

### III

Another overt act of this period was the murder of Nanda Lal Banerjee, in which the hands of both the Mukti Sangha and the Attonnati Samiti boys were in operation. The name of Inspector Nanda Lal Banerjee had acquired extreme notoriety to the revolutionaries after his attempted arrest of Prafulla Chaki at the Mokamah station, for avoiding which Prafulla "blew out his brains" by means of his revolver. Prafulla Chaki was an associate of Khudiram Bose in the Muzaffarpur bomb outrage (April 30, 1908) and was shadowed by Nanda Lal Banerjee in the train in course of his flight. The sequel of the Muzaffarpur incident was the frantic search by the police both in Calcutta and in the mofussil, leading to the arrest of a large number of persons including Aurobindo Ghose. The Attonnati Samiti, which was then spiritually and ideologically linked up with the Manicktola centre, decided to avenge it by doing away with the life of Nanda Lal Banerjee.

In 1908, Nanda Lal Banerjee, an intelligent and handsome young officer of the Police Department, was putting up for some time in Calcutta at the residence of his relative in Serpentine Lane, not far away from the junction of St. James Square (now Santosh Mitra Park). This information being obtained

by Probhas Chandra De, a senior member of the Attonnati Samiti, from Dr. Gyan Chatterjee (Bholada), a sympathiser of the Samiti and neighbour of Nanda Lal's relative, Ranen Ganguli was deputed to secure further news about Nanda Lal's movements in Calcutta. Incidentally, it may be noted that Ranen Ganguli, an employee of the Administrator General of Bengal, resided from November 1, 1908 at the house of his maternal uncle in Huzurimal Lane. November 9, 1908, which was a Government holiday, was fixed for the execution of the plot, and Srish Pal (*alias* Naren) and Ranen Ganguli were entrusted with it. Srish Pal, a member of the Mukti Sangha, frequently visited Calcutta and maintained intimate relation with the Attonnati Samiti mainly through Harish Sikdar, in whose tiled *basti* opposite to the Dufferin Hospital Srish Pal later on resided. Under instruction from Hem Ghose to kill Nanda Lal Banerjee, Srish Pal came to Calcutta and took part in the conspiracy in collaboration with the Attonnati Samiti.

On November 9, 1908 the leaders, viz , Probhas De, Harish Sikdar, Dhiren Chakravarty (a 5th year M. Sc. student),<sup>4</sup> Ahin Chatterjee etc. met at Ranen Ganguli's maternal uncle's house in Huzurimal Lane. Soon came Srish Pal *alias* Naren, a nominee of Harish Sikdar, about whom Ranen Ganguli knew nothing beforehand, and the leaders provided Srish Pal and Ranen Ganguli with two revolvers, and also with two big knives besmeared with potassium cyanide secured from the Chemistry Laboratory of the Presidency College by Dharendra Nath Chakravarty. The knives were meant for additional safeguards; if the revolvers miscarried as in the Overtoun Hall incident two days earlier, the knives could be used both for offence and defence. At the appointed hour Ranen and Naren set out and waited before the old *Siva* temple cracking and taking groundnuts, and shortly after finding Nanda Lal Banerjee coming out of his house they moved forward. It was Naren (Srish Pal) who actually killed Nanda Lal just at the south-west corner of St. James Park at about 7 P.M. To be sure of the accomplished murder Ranen Ganguli also struck the head of the man with his own revolver.

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4. Dharendra Nath Chakravarty, a grandson of Ram Chandra Tarkalankar, was a favourite student of Sir P. C. Ray at the Presidency College and later became Principal of the Ripon College.

Immediately after the incident Ranen Gānguli came home to change his dress, and within minutes he went to a tailor's shop to place an order for a shirt to ensure his alibi and then he went to Sir P. C. Ray to whom he narrated the entire story. Be it observed here that Sir P. C. Ray was a great sympathiser of the cause of the revolutionaries and frequently rendered financial help to them. According to Sri Hem Chandra Ghose, Srish Pal, after the murder of Nanda Lal Banerjee, went to Harish Sikdar to whom he surrendered his arms.

On this daring performance the *Statesman* commented as follows: "The circumstances under which this crime was committed disclose a remarkable daring combined with diabolical cunning, and point to the fact that the clever young officer has been long marked down and closely watched.

"Apparently, the whole affair had been well thought out and every detail carefully planned. That the assassins were able successfully to carry out their nefarious design in a congested part of the town at a time when there would be a number of persons moving about, points to the perpetrators of the crime being able to rely, at least, upon a safe refuge not far from the scene of their crime; for although the sudden and dastardly attack on the unfortunate officer was made at a cross-road, and at 7 o' clock in the evening, the miscreants appear to have been able to get away comfortably".<sup>5</sup>

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5. The *Statesman*, November 10, 1908.

## APPENDIX II

-29 August, 1914

Dear M.

Before your letter came i.e. yesterday, the news was published that the Government had drawn back from its proposal, and today the Amrita Bazar with its comment arrived. I presume, therefore, no immediate answer from me is needed. But in case anything of the kind is raised again, I shall give you my opinion in the matter.

We gain nothing by preaching an unconditional loyalty to the Government, such as is the fashion now-a-days, or doing anything which even in appearance strengthens the discussion towards an abject and unmanly love in politics. Gandhi's loyalism is not a pattern for India which is not South Africa, and even Gandhi's loyalism is corrected by passive resistance. An abject love of servility in politics is not "diplomacy" and is not good politics. It does not deceive or disarm the opponent; it does encourage nervelessness, fear and a cringing cunning in the subject people. What Gandhi has been attempting in South Africa is to secure for Indians the position of kindly treated serfs—as a stepping-stone to something better. Loyalty and Ambulance Corps means the same thing in India. But the conditions of India are not those of South Africa; our position is different and our aim is different, not to secure a few privileges, but to create a nation of men fit for independence and able to secure and keep it. We have been beaten in the first attempt, like every other nation similarly circumstanced. That is no reason why the whole people should go back to a condition of abject fear, grovelling loyalty and whining complaint. The public Nationalist policy has always been:—

1. Eventual independence
2. No co-operation without control
3. A masculine courage in speech and action

Let us add a fourth.

4. Readiness to accept real concessions and pay their just price, but no more.

Beyond that, I do not see the necessity of any change. We recognise that immediate independence is not practicable and we are ready to defend the British rule against any foreign nation, for that means defending our own future independence.

Therefore, if the Government accepts volunteers or favours the institution of Boy-Scouts, we give our aid, but not to be mere stretcher-bearers. This is the side of principle; now let us look at that of policy.

(1) I don't appreciate Sarat Maharaj's position. If self-sacrifice is the object, every human being has the whole of life as a field for self-sacrifice and does not depend on any Government for that. We can show our sacrificing activities every moment, if we want. It is not a question of sacrifice at all, it is a question of military training. If the young men wish to organise for charitable work, the Government is not going to stop it, even though they may watch and suspect. I put that aside altogether.

(2) The leaders suggested co-operation in return for some substantial self-government. They are now offering co-operation without any return at all. Very self-sacrificing, but not political. If indeed, Government were willing to train thousands of young men in military service as volunteers, territorials or boy-scouts, whether for keeping the peace or as a reserve in case of invasion, then we need not boggle about the return. But, after so much experience, do these addle-headed politicians think the Government is going to do that except in case of absolute necessity and as a choice between two evils? When will that absolute necessity come? Only if the war goes again, and then seriously and they have to withdraw their troops from India. I shall discuss that point later on.

(3) Meanwhile what have the Government been doing? After testing the temper of the people and, you may be sure, watching closely what young men came forward as volunteers and who did not, they have removed an offer which had already been whittled down to a mere harmless Ambulance Corps in which the young men have plenty of chances of getting tilled, but none of learning real warfare. Mere common sense warns us not to trust such an administration and to think ten times before accepting its offers. We know Lord Hardinge's policy; (1) sweet words, (2) quiet systematic coercion, (3) concession where



obstinacy would mean too great a row and too much creation of deep-seated hostility.

Having prefaced so much, let us look at the utility of the things offered us or offered by us.

#### 1. Ambulance Corps

The only possible utilities would be two: (1) to train two thousand young men to be steady under fire (2) to train them to act together under discipline in an easy but dangerous service. Now it is quite possible for us to create courage in our young men, without these means, and I hope our best men, or let me say, our men generally do not need to become stretcher-bearers in a European War in order to have the necessary nerve, courage, steadiness and discipline. If therefore an Ambulance Corps is again suggested and accepted, either refuse or let only those young men go who are enthusiastic, but still lightheaded, self-indulgent or undisciplined. Possibly, the experience may steady and discipline them. It may be necessary to let this be done, if the circumstances are such that to refuse entirely would reflect on our national courage or be interpreted as a backing out from a national engagement.

Boy-Scouts=Volunteer Corps=Territorials. All these are entirely good, provided the policies are kept at a distance, and provided officers as well as men are trained and the Government control is limited to the giving of military discipline in the first two cases. Even without the second proviso, any of these things would be worth accepting.

Only in the case of volunteers going to the scene of war, you must see that we are not crippled by all our best men or even a majority being sent; only enough to bring in an element among us who have seen actual warfare.

I think any of these things may one day become possible. Since the last year new forces have come into the world and are now strong enough to act, which are likely to alter the whole face of the world. The present war is only a beginning, not the end.\* We have to consider what are our chances and what we ought to do in these circumstances.

The war is open to a certain number of broad chances.

1. Those bringing about the destruction of the two Teutonic empires, German and Austrian.

This may happen either by an immediate German defeat,

and the enemies being broken and chased back from Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine to Berlin, which is not probable, or by the Russian arrival at Berlin and a successful French stand near Rheims or Compiègne; or by the entry of Italy and the remaining Balkan states into the war and the invasion of Austria-Hungary from two sides.

II. Those bringing about the weakening or isolation of the British power.

This may be done by the Germans destroying the British expeditionary force and, entering Paris and dictating terms to France while Russia is checked in its march to Berlin by a strong Austro-German force opening in the German quadrilateral between the forts of Danzig, Thorn, Posen and Königsberg. If this happens Russia may possibly enter into a compact with Germany based on a reconciliation of the three Empires and a reversion to the old idea of a simultaneous attack on England and a division of her empire between Germany and Russia.

III. Those bringing about the destruction of British power.

This may happen by the shattering of the British fleet and a German landing in England.

In either of these two last cases an invasion of India by Germany, Russia or Japan is only a question of time, and England will be unable to resist except by one of those means.

1. Universal conscription in England and the colonies.
2. The aid of Japan or some other foreign power.
3. The aid of the Indian people.

The first is useless for the defence of India, in case III, and can only be applied in case II, if England is still mistress of the seas. The second is dangerous to England herself, since the ally who helps, may also covet. The third means the concession of self-government to India.

In case I, there will only remain four considerable powers in Europe and Asia, Russia, France, England, Japan—with perhaps a Balkan Confederacy or Empire as a fifth. That means as the next stage of struggle between England and Russia in Asia. There again England is reduced to one of the three alternatives of combination of them.

Of course, the war may take different turns from the above, with slightly altered circumstances and result; the one thing

that is impossible is that it should leave the world as it was before.' In any case, the question of India must rise at no very long date. If England adopts more or less grudgingly the third alternative, our opportunity arrives and we must be ready to take it—on this basis, continuance of British rule and co-operation until we are strong enough to stand by ourselves. If not, we must still decide how we are to prepare ourselves, so as not to pass from one foreign domination to a worse.

I want those of you who have the capacity to consider the situation as I have described it, to think over it, enlarging our old views which are no longer sufficient, and accustom yourselves to act always with these new and larger conceptions in your minds. I shall write nothing myself about my views, just as yet, as that might prevent you from thinking yourselves.

Only, two things you will see obviously from it, first, the necessity of seizing on any opportunity that arises of organisation or military training (not self-sacrificing charity, that has already been done); secondly, the necessity of creating an organisation and finding the means, if no opportunity presents itself. It will be necessary for some one from Bengal to come and see me before long, but that will probably not be till October or later.

I shall write to you before long further on the subject, as also on other matters.

K.\*

---

\* Aurobindo Ghose wrote many letters in those days under the nickname of 'Kali' or 'K'. The addressee 'M' here refers to Moti Lal Roy of Chandernagore.

## APPENDIX III

BERLIN—CHARLOTTENBURG WIELANDSTR 38

NOVEMBER 13, 1918\*

TO

HERRN LEGATIONSTRAT VON WESENDONK  
AUSWARTIGES AMT,  
BERLIN.

The following private notes I respectfully forward to you for your kind consideration. The notes come from my personal capacity only.

Yours truly,

Bhupendranath Datta

"The war has come to an unexpected and sad conclusion on the part of Germany. Peace is going to take place and arms are going to be stored up. But none of the both sides are going to forget the insults and injuries that each has received at the hand of the other.

We on our part never believe that there will be any lasting world peace or a lasting peace between Germany and Great Britain. Great Britain is jealous of Germany and wants to ruin her politically and economically. The present war has been an economic war and as long as India remains in the hands of Great Britain, the latter country would remain as the Mistress of the world. This will jeopardise Germany's national development. By and by, Germany will see that Germany with her teeming millions cannot get a breathing space unless Great Britain gets weak and hurled down from her proud position.

But how that is to be achieved? The achievement lies in detaching India from Great Britain, i.e. India must be set free. India always is seething with discontent and there is always a natural antipathy between the British and the Indians. But a disarmed India cannot revolt.

Two things are necessary to bring about a revolution in

\* A microfilmed copy of the original letter is to be found in the National Archives of India, New Delhi.

**India:** (1) Organization (2) Supply of arms. Organization prerequisites (a) Men (b) Money.

Men are available for the purpose but money is lacking. The rich men won't help the revolutionaries unless and until they see a complete chance of success on the part of the revolutionaries.

Whatever money the Indian revolutionaries get at home they spend for the home purpose. But money is necessary for work in foreign countries.

The work inside the country must be supported from outside.

The inside work consists in spreading a network of organization all over the land. This organization should import and store arms, make propaganda amongst the masses and the Indian soldiers, and they should be in constant communication with the workers in the foreign countries.

The money what the Indians raise from home is not enough. They must be financed from outside. Besides they must have secure means of correspondence with the foreign countries.

The work from the foreign lands consists in:

- (1) To bring the Indian question before every international political organization.
- (2) To make a vigorous propaganda for India from the Press and the Platform.
- (3) To produce and distribute literature on India.
- (4) To form a pro-India party in every country.
- (5) To teach Indians the manufacture of fire-arms.
- (6) To give military training to the Indians in secrecy.
- (7) To import arms to India.

These are the main points of work in order to bring about a successful revolution for India. We have already said that Great Britain is the perpetual enemy of Germany, and it will be of Germany's interest to see India free. But without a foreign help India can never be free. The Indian revolution must be financed.

The English formed and helped the English Balkan Committee which brought about the first Balkan War.

Some German Society and various German gentlemen helped the Bulgarian Komitadjis.

The British helped the young Turks who brought about the Turkish revolution.

A Japanese Syndicate helped the Chinese revolution.

The Armenians have been helped by the former Russian Government.

Further it will be seen from world's history that no nation becomes free without the help of another nation. For this reason, we pray that the German Government would consider the proposal of secretly supporting the Indian revolution.

If we are assured of the permanent support of the German Government, then we can work in the above mentioned way. We can bring some competent men from India to take charge of the various department of the work.

These men will conduct newspapers in English, French and German as organs of the Indian Nationalist Committee.

They will represent India in various international Congresses.

Also, centres are to be formed in Europe, America, Japan, China, Turkey, S. E. Africa, Turkestan and Afghanistan.

There is constant caravan route from central Asia to India through Afghanistan and Tibet. Indian merchants are always coming out and going to India from the Mediterranean and S. E. African coasts. Literature and news are to be smuggled through these routes. A small quantity of arms can be sent by that method. In case the German Government accedes to help us, then if it is possible, our correspondences should be carried through the German Consular Service as now.

Besides these propaganda works, there remains three more important works, i.e., propaganda among the Indian ruling Princes and Notables, and the supply of arms to India and the military training to the Indian revolutionaries.

If the German Government can see its way of helping the Indian nationalist movement, then notable Germans can be sent to India on the ostentatious object of travel and they will meet the Indian princes and notables, and make friendship with them and convert them to the revolutionist cause. Of course the Indian notables should be given hint of German support if necessary.

The Government in conjunction with the Indian revolutionaries have to smuggle arms to India.

Again, a good many competent young men are secretly to be given training in the manufacture of fire-arms and military training.

I respectfully request the Government to consider the pro-

posal of continually supporting the Indian revolutionary movement and if the proposal be agreeable to the Government then ways and means be found to make arrangements for the support.

Rhupendranath Datta

## APPENDIX IV

Kerman (Persia)  
August 3rd, 1915

My Dear Mr. Freeman,

I was sorry I could not write you earlier to keep you informed of my whereabouts, as I had to stop all correspondence for some time. Hoping to be excused. I believe my last letter from Constantinople, just on the eve of my depart, had reached you all right. Our fond ideas cherished by Har Dayal and myself on the banks of the Bosphorous has not yet come out to be a reality; but if this present war lasts for a long time sooner or later will my ideas be fulfilled. Har Dayal mysteriously disappeared from Constantinople for reasons known to him, and I had to work single-handed. My travels from Constantinople to Kerman by land route was very interesting. I visited Bushire, Shiraz, Ispahan, Yezd (C. Persia) as a delegate of the German Expeditionary party. I had my days of trouble at Bushire which is a zone of British influence. I had to make a midnight flight from there. I was there only four days, but kept hidden by Persian Nationalists. The Consul and a German doctor went arrested and sent over to Bombay as prisoners.

It was only two months since I had been here. Kerman is a province of South-East Persia bordering on Beluchistan. The arrival of an Indian as a German delegate near Beluchistan, the British Consul here smells something in it. There is a rumour from B. Consulate, both at Ispahan and Kerman, that if the German expeditionary party proceeds beyond Kerman they will be warmly received by British Indian troops. The German Consul, Dr. Erich Zugmayer, arrived here three weeks ago and

I am helping him to start the 'Consulate. Persia has entered a new life and although the Government at Tehran, influenced by Russia and England, or rather bribed by them, remains neutral, the people are entirely with the Germans and stand for the war. There is a change of Ministry and new Cabinet has just been formed, the particulars of which has not yet reached me. This new Cabinet is entirely due to German influence.

I would be leaving here very soon. Please send G. A. (*Galic American*) and other literature.....Give my hearty salaams to Mr. Devoy and other friends of *Galic American* and remember me kindly to our Indian friends.

Will you please let me know the present situation in Ireland and the attitude of the Washington Government in the present crisis? I am just writing to Madame Cama and Har Dayal after a lapse of 8 months. If you have occasion to write to them, be good enough to inform that I am in Persia, for my letters may not reach them. The Postal Service is very irregular row-a-days.

I am getting on well, hoping you to be the same. Excuse me again for the delay. With kindest personal regards.

Hoflichst grussend,

DAWOOD ALI KHAN.\*

\*The above letter was written by Pramatha Nath Datta, a Bengali revolutionary, under the *alias* of Dawood Ali Khan, to George Freeman, the Irish revolutionary then living in America.



## APPENDIX V

LETTER OF VIREN CHATTOPADHYAY TO PRESIDENT WILSON,  
OCTOBER 5, 1918

Mr. President,

In the name of the oppressed Indian people we thank you for the principles that you have enunciated in your speech of 27th September. We hope these principles will be the foundation of the future world peace and the safeguards of the weaker nations.

We, in behalf of the Indian people, appeal for impartial justice for India without bias or prejudice against her on political or racial grounds. We demand the same rights as are enjoyed by all other civilised nations. Under the oppressive system of British Rule India's normal development is hindered in order to serve the material interests of the British nation. Great Britain has established her Indian Empire by violating solemn treaties and pledges and trampling on the rights of many small nations. We point out, that a permanent world peace is impossible so long as India and other weak nations suffer from injustice. Therefore we pray that India should be admitted as a free nation in the proposed "League of Nations" without political or economic subordination to Great Britain and that the cause of India should be put before the League of Nations and the General Peace Congress, which should arrive at a definite agreement with regard to this important question of world-politics.

We appeal to your sense of justice and we hope that you will see that the noble principles enunciated in your speech are applied to India

Yours truly  
V. Chattopadhyay



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